

Wm Huntington Inven.t

Engraved by G. Terry Paternoster Row



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A KEY to the PLATE.

1ſt. IN the jovial company on the right hand, at the bottom of the print, you ſee Prodigalis, with his hair undreſſed, drinking defiance to all religious melancholy in a full-bumper; 2dly. When money is gone, and his guilt is felt, you ſee him bare-headed, with his hand on his breaſt, like the publican, in a penſive frame, and on a ſolitary walk; 3dly. In the *valley of dry bones* you ſee his ſpiritual death, repreſented by a corpſe before the watchman, and of his being alarmed and awakened by the ſound of a trumpet; the watchman ſhews the office of a miniſter; his lanthorn denotes the watchman's light, which ſhines on the ſinner. 4thly. You ſee Prodigalis, filled with fear and aſtoniſhment, going to the law of GOD to receive the force of the commandment, where *ſin revives and he dies*, Rom. vii. 9. 5thly, He ſtands in the light of the law, in the *filthy rags of his own righteouſneſs*, covering his face in token of ſhame; deſtruction, or Death, at one hand, Job. xviii. 12. and Satan accuſing him on the other, Zech. iii. 1. and Moſes pointing to the Law that he has broken, and accuſing him of it, John v. 45. 6thly, The eye of Juſtice is on him, Exod. xiv. 24. his ſins are in the light of GOD's countenance, Pſa. xc. 8. and the ſword of Juſtice is drawn to cut him down as a cumberer of the ground. Luke xiii. 7. 7thly, His having been taught the condemning power of the Law by GOD the Father, he goes to the Saviour on the Croſs; where Satan attempts to blind his eyes, leſt the death of CHRIST in the Goſpel ſhould ſhine into his heart, 2 Cor. iv. 4. 8thly, From thence he goes with the *crown of loving kindneſs* on his head, Pſ. ciii. 4. the *robe of righteouſneſs* on his back, Iſa. lxi. 10. and with the palm of victory in his hand, that ſhews he has *overcome* Satan *by the blood of the Lamb*, Rev. xii. 11. 9thly, You have him in the fiery furnace of affliction, Iſa. xlviii. 10. and Satan blowing up anger, heat, and paſſion, as having a *power of the air*, Eph. ii. 2. 10thly, You have him in the

waters of dejection and deſpondency, and Satan ſuggeſting deſponding thoughts to his mind, with an intent to carry him away in the flood of deſpair, Rev. xii. 15. 11thly, He gets *through the fire, and through the water, and out into a wealthy place*, Pſa. lvi. 12. where you ſee him at the front of goſpel Zion, where the *ſheep reſt at noon*, Song i. 7. and where the *evergreens* flouriſh, Iſa. xli. 19. 12thly, His path is very crooked and rough, Iſa. xlv. 2. in which you ſee him halting, with one of Satan's fiery darts in his breaſt, Eph. vi. 16. his *feet ſlip*, Pſa. xlcv. 18. but he is not *utterly caſt down*, becauſe the LORD upholds him, Pſa. xxxvii. 24. At laſt you have him in his crown, robe, and palm, ready to paſs the valley of death's ſhadow, under the light of the LORD, with the glorified LAMB in his view, having *ſeven horns and ſeven eyes*, Rev. v. 6. The colour of the Devil ſhews his *dark proceedings*; his lower parts his *brutal actions*; his wings his *diligence in miſchief*; and his crooked tail the evil inſinuations of ſin, and the curſed *ſting of guilt*. The in and out path to Heaven ſhews how crooked the path of tribulation appears to fleſh and blood; and yet the firſt ſtep of Prodigalis, after he has left the World, being almoſt perpendicular with the Lamb on the Throne, ſhews that the road will appear ſtreight at laſt, when we appear filled with the fulneſs of Him that makes darkneſs light, and crooked things ſtreight.

4 JY 59

THE

Juſtification of a Sinner,

AND

SATAN's LAW-SUIT WITH HIM.

IN A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Two Men of Different Experiences.

BY

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S. S.

Miniſter of the Goſpel at PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, Little Titchfield-ſtreet; at MONKWELL-STREET CHAPEL in the City; and at RICHMOND in Surrey.

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MDCCLXXXVII.

Entered at Stationers' Hall, according to Act of Parliament.

May 21, 1787.



THE PREFACE.

COURTEOUS READER,

THE following treatiſe is a ſpiritual medley of heavenly things;—an entertainment for the mind and conſcience of gracious ſouls, who, for the want of goſpel light to diſcern the rich proviſion and ſtability of GOD's covenant, are often ſunk to live beneath the privileges thereof. I have frequently heard people, who I believe to be truly gracious, declare themſelves to be bowed down, and continually dejected, under the apprehenſions of a dreadful ſcrutiny which they ſuppoſe the Saviour will have with them in the day of judgment. In order to remove the believer's groundleſs fears, to ſhew him the privileges of the covenant, and to excite his gratitude to GOD, this little treatiſe is publiſhed.

The

The things that are conſidered, and attempted to be explained, are the ſpiritual reſurrections of a ſinner—his arraignment and juſtification—his ſpiritual birth, heirſhip, and inheritance—his evidences for Heaven—the conflicts he hath with the devil—and the office of CHRIST as an Advocate.

And in order to convey my thoughts as intelligibly as poſſible it is written by way of dialogue,—queſtion and anſwer being an excellent way of conveying information, and with which the word of GOD is replete.

The perſons made choice of to carry on the dialogue, are CUSHI and AHIMAAZ, two ſervants of David, both ſtiled in Scripture *good men.* CUSHI is here repreſented as one wrought upon by grace while he obſerved the viſible hand of GOD with David; which is intended to ſhew how a Chriſtian's life, and the hand of GOD with him, impreſſes the mind and convicts the conſcience of a ſinner. AHIMAAZ is repreſented as running with tidings before he was ſent; which is introduced as a caution to the many in our days, both learned and illiterate, who take on them the office of the miniſtry, without any ſpiritual qualification for it, or divine call to it; who are encouraged and emboldened by no-

thing elſe but pride, inſenſibility, and ignorance. A thirſt for human applauſe, and ignorance of the experience and wiſdom of the Church—ignorance of the plague of the human heart—ignorance of the majeſty of GOD, and the importance of the miniſtry, appears to be the baſis and bulwark of too many.

The houſes of *Saul* and *David* are introduced as prefiguring the family of the old Adam and the houſehold of faith. CUSHI's halting between the two is intended to exhibit the ſtruggles that the weak believer feels between the fleſh and the ſpirit. The revival of the work of grace on CUSHI, at the death of David, is introduced to ſhew that many young converts, who are a ſcourge to the ſervants of GOD in their lives, are brought to lament their death, being ignorant of their worth till they feel their loſs; as Iſrael of old, who was a perpetual burden to Moſes for forty years; but when he was dead they bemoaned him for thirty days: or like Saul, who was ſo often a plague to pious Samuel in his life, yet would ſell himſelf to the devil for a ſight of his mantle when he was dead.

I have ſtudied plainneſs in this work, and endeavoured to be as intelligible to my Reader

Reader as poſſible; not expecting that the conſequence of the noble, the acquired knowledge of the ſcholar, the wiſdom of the critick, the refined judgment of the polite and gay, will ever ſubmit to a peruſal of any performance of mine, unleſs it be to cavil at it. To be ſhort, if any part of the revealed will of GOD be made plain to the ſeeker or to the believer; if his judgment be informed, his doubts and fears removed; if any bleſſing of the covenant be diſcovered; if his mind be entertained, his faith eſtabliſhed, and his covenant GOD endeared to him, I truſt my end is anſwered; and what the outſide profeſſor, or the open enemy to truth may have to ſay, will have but little weight with me, except it be to pity him.

That the believer may read without prejudice, and profit by reading, is the deſire and prayer of, Courteous Reader, thy willing ſervant, and tried companion in tribulation,

4 JY 59 W. HUNTINGTON.

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Woodin, Thomas

MAIDENHEAD, Berks.

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Adams, Miſs
Ayres, Edward
Cook, Rev. John
Drewatt, Mr.
Edwards, Miſs
Fowler, William
Langton, John, 7 Books
Poulton, Joſeph
Rimell, John
Weſtbrook, Stephen

PORTSMOUTH.

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Chamberlain, Joſeph
Chamberlain, James
Dollard, Benjamin
Garnett, William
Groves, Nathaniel
Taber, Charles
Wickenden, Joſeph

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Clerk, Mrs.
Clements, Mrs.
Clerk, Strand
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Law, Thomas
Leech, Thomas
Morton, Charles
Smith, William, 2 Books
Sadgrove, William
Swaine, James
Spawling, Mrs.
Townſend, Sarah
Wilſon, William

WOOLWICH.

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Taylor, John
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Weldiſh, William
White, Henry
White, Mark

DEPTFORD.

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Jones, John
Judd, Elizabeth
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From WALES.

Brewer, William
Mugan, Charles
Rogers, Thomas, Newport
Rogers, Thomas, Uſk

Thomas Humphrys, Weſterleigh, Glouceſter-ſhire, 2 Books.

The following BOOKS alſo, written by Mr. HUNTINGTON, may be had at the Places mentioned in the Title Page.

The SPIRITUAL SEA VOYAGE; or Chriſtian Experience in Sea Terms.

The ARMINIAN SKELETON; or the Carnal Preacher Diſſected and Anatomiſed. The Second Edition, with Additions.

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The KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TAKEN BY PRAYER; or the Life and Converſion of the Author.

A SERMON ON THE DIMENSIONS OF ETERNAL LOVE; from Eph. iii. 18, 19.

Another, entitled, An INNOCENT GAME FOR BABES IN GRACE; from Iſa. xi. 8.

Another on the LAW ESTABLISHED BY FAITH; from Rom. iii. 31.

Five Numbers of the EPISTLES OF FAITH; or Spiritual Letters.

TIDINGS FROM WALLINGFORD: and,

ZION'S ALARM NOT WITHOUT CAUSE.

THE

JUSTIFICATION of a SINNER;

OR,

SATAN's LAW-SUIT with a SAINT.

CUSHI having loſt his royal maſter, took a ſolitary walk to reflect on the paſt experiences, and wonderful deliverances, left upon record by him; until, in a meaſure, he thought they became, according to his ſenſations, like his own experience. He ſuddenly found his underſtanding much opened, worldly things vaniſhed from his mind, and every thought of his heart appeared at command, which he employed in reflecting on paſt mercies, and in pleaſing anticipations on future glory.

Reflections on his paſt conduct brought many things freſh to his mind, which afforded matter for real contrition. But the thoughts of GOD's long forbearance and ſlowneſs to anger diſſolved his ſoul, and excited his warmeſt gratitude. He came ſuddenly tothe brow of a little hill, which is called the *Hill Mizar*. Here CUSHI meditated upon the former deliverance of his royal maſter.

On this ſpot, ſaid he, his falſe hope gave way, and the burden of his ſins ſunk him into the keeneſt ſenſations of divine diſpleaſure, which involved him in all real and imaginary horror. Here it was that he prayed out of the depths of deſpondency; and his prayer was anſwered by the SAVI-

OUR in an open viſion of death on the croſs.—Here my bleſſed maſter ſaw the crucifixion of the ſon of God. Yea, he ſaw his perſecutors pierce his hands and his feet. He ſaw them part his garment among them, and caſt lots on his veſture. This made him ſo dotingly fond of this little hill. Who can deſcribe the feelings of a ſoul, encompaſſed with the fears of death, and chains of guilt? When the great Redeemer appears burdened, as the ſinner's ſponſor, in all the agonies of an unparalleled ſufferer, burdened with all his ſins, under the awful arreſt of vindictive juſtice, and ſinking into the threefold ſhades of treble death.

Oh love, love, love! Love fixed upon an enemy—an enemy in open rebellion: Love that would undertake to cope with divine vengeance: Love that would expoſe truth, purity, and innocence, to ignominy, ſcorn, and deriſion; and all to redeem, reſcue, and reconcile a rebel to the beſt of ſovereigns, and make the completely miſerable, eternally happy. My maſters hope ſprung from the viſions of death, and purſued the reſurrection of his adorable LORD, *to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that ſhall never fade away.*

Surely it was an imperceptible *faith* that made him importune; and it was *patience* in importuning that brought him to ſuch a *bleſſed experience*; and *the experience* of ſuch a deliverance brought *him to hope.*

Oh that I may never forget, or loſe the ſenſe of his deliverance; the petitions that he put up; nor this ſacred ſpot, where his deliverance was wrought.

wrought. Here it was that he ſaid, *Oh, my God! my ſoul is caſt down within me, and thou raiſed me up; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites from the Hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep.* Pſalm xlii. 6, 7.

Here it was that the clouds of God's diſpleaſure againſt his ſins began to gather thick over his head, and to threaten a fatal diſcharge on him. The *water ſpouts* were felt, and juſtice ſpoke in them, demanding perfect obedience, or infinite puniſhment. This made him try to *haſten his eſcape from the ſtormy wind and tempeſt.* Bleſſed be God, who revealed his crucified ſon to him, when under the cloud of impending judgment, whoſe blood, from the becalmed conſcience of my royal maſter, met with the approbation and favour even of divine juſtice itſelf.

Well might the evangelical prophet ſay, and *a man ſhall be an hiding-place from the ſtorm, a covert from the tempeſt, a river of water in a dry place, and the ſhadow of a great rock in this weary land.* The Lord God of Iſrael did not reveal his dear ſon to my valuable maſter with a drawn ſword, as he did to Balaam, who ſaid he ſhould ſee him, but not now, and behold him, but not nigh; but he accompanied the viſion with an appropriating faith. To ſee a Saviour and a Judge in one perſon, without faith in his ſalvation, is of all ſights the moſt afflicting, and would ſink a ſoul for ever. *I had utterly fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.*— Pſalm xxvii. 13.

Cushi now deſcended the Hill Mizar, which led with a gradual deſcent into a verdant valley. Here he was bleſſed with a moſt raviſhing view of the covenant of promiſe, which afforded matter of pleaſing and delightful meditation, and every freſh diſcovery gave him freſh entertainment, which cauſed his ſoul to ſink down into the ſweeteſt reſt and quietude, while the glorious beams of light and love ſhone with divine radiance upon his whole ſoul.

In this light, he ſaw a little river run through the midſt of the vale, which his thoughts led him to trace to the fountain head; and he found it to be (what his royal maſter called) the *ſtill waters*. Pſalm xxiii. 2. which came from the father to the ſon, and through the ſon to us.

Theſe waters forcibly reveal the father's love, and the ſon's ſalvation, and ſanctify and make mete ſouls for heaven, without whoſe aid no promiſe comes with power, nor does the word quicken or refreſh the ſoul.

Poor Cushi, finding the good work, formerly begun, to be revived, and reſtoring grace ſo ſweetly to operate on his ſoul, he was afraid to engage again in ſtate affairs, or in any other lawful calling, fearing a ſecond relapſe; which holy fear certainly was good. But as God does not light a candle to put it under a buſhel, nor under a bed, that it ſhould be hid, but on a candleſtick, that it may give light to all that are in the houſe, it is neceſſary to let it ſhine before men, that they may ſee the light within, while it reflects its holy

 rays

rays without. To be diligent in buſineſs, and fervent in ſpirit, is a command given to every Chriſtian, and what the moſt eminent ſaints have been brought to ſubmit to, from Abel, the firſt martyr, to Amos the prophet, and even from JESUS CHRIST, to Paul the tent-maker.

However, it was with much reluctance that CUSHI left his lodgings, and the verdant meadow. But ſo conſpicuous a proof of the faithfulneſs of his LORD, made him depart with this perſuaſion and confeſſion, *the* LORD *is my ſhepherd; I ſhall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green paſtures; he leadeth me beſide the ſtill waters. He reſtoreth my ſoul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteouſneſs for his name's ſake.* Pſalm xxiii. 2, 3.

CUSHI now roſe up, and travelled off, moſt ſweetly refreſhed, and he intended to walk quite through the verdant valley, but he had not got far, before a bright cloud appeared in ſight, and he expected a ſhower; and when it came over his head, he felt a moſt pleaſing ſenſation on his ſpirit, wonderful motions in his mind, and a particular flow of affections, which for a while made him ſtand as one entranced; and he ſuppoſed he ſaw a real cloud. But this text occurred to his mind: *In the light of the King's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.* Prov. xvi. 15. And ſo he found it, for the *thoughts* of GOD in the promiſes dropt in ſuch an abundant manner on him, that his cup overflowed, till he vented it in confeſſion, adoration, thankfulneſs and praiſe. *The words of a man's mouth are as deep wa-*

ters, and the well-ſpring of wiſdom as a flowing brook. Prov. xviii. 4. CUSHI, finding ſuch divine light and underſtanding crowd in upon him, ſadly wanted to minute down what he ſaw and felt; but his mind was ſo taken up, that all efforts to begin a diary proved vain; he had no thoughts at command for that; he was therefore forced to breathe out the overflowing of his joys to the fountain of life, from whence they came.

The church, when thus filled, is a fountain ſealed, until the ſeal opens, and lets it forth. *A garden incloſed is my ſiſter, my ſpouſe, a ſpring ſhut up, a fountain ſealed.* Song, iv. 12. But when the ſpirit opens the heart, it plays all its ſtreams into the fountain of divine fulneſs, from whence the ſtreams came.

Thus the LORD *drinks his own wine with his own milk, and eats his own honey-comb with his own honey.* Song, v. 1. Or, to ſpeak in expreſs terms, he is entertained with the fervent devotions produced by his own ſpirit. Thus GOD the father, and GOD the ſon, are glorified in the gracious ſoul by GOD the Holy Ghoſt. GOD is a ſpirit, and will be worſhipped by his own ſpirit in us; and as a GOD of truth, he will be worſhipped in truth; not as an object repreſented in a falſe light, nor with a falſe heart.

CUSHI's devotions were truly divine, for he broke forth into the following expreſſion of ſympathy and gratitude to his much-ſlighted and long-neglected LORD. O thou ſource of all divine happineſs, and fountain of light and life, who hath

promiſed

promiſed to the parched and barren ſouls of thine elect, both the former and the latter rain moderately in their ſeaſon; I received thy bleſſed word at firſt with the dew of thy ſpecial grace to give it root; but, alas! worldly-mindedneſs ſoon cauſed my joys to wither; but thou haſt reviſited my barren heart, and made the *parched ground a pool, and the thirſty land ſprings of water.* Aſtoniſhing, that an heart, once the *habitation of dragons, ſhould be turned into a ſpringing well.* Iſai. xxxv. 7. *O that I never may be left to wander from thy ſhadow again, nor to ſlight the ſanctuary ſervice of my God. Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe; they will be ſtill praiſing thee; bleſſed is the man whoſe ſtrength is in thee; in whoſe heart are the ways of them, who, paſſing through the valley of Baca, make it a well; the rain alſo filleth the pools.* Pſa. lxxxiv. 5, 6.

Cushi had now almoſt croſſed the valley of Baca, and ſuddenly he eſpied an hill before him, with a gradual aſcent, and he ſhortly began to aſcend it; and the higher he went, the greater his joys were; till at laſt he vented the fulneſs of his ſoul in praiſe and acclamations of joy, ſaying, *Oh my God, as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden cauſeth the things that are ſown in it to ſpring forth, ſo the* Lord God *doth cauſe righteouſneſs and praiſe to ſpring forth in my once barren, but now revived heart.* Iſa. lxi. 11.

Cushi having gained the ſummit of the hill, ſaw a fine ſpreading tree, and under it a *ſeat*, with a man ſitting thereon, who had a book in his hand.

The reader being penſive in thought, did not diſcern the approach of CUSHI. CUSHI perceiving this, approached as near as he could, without diſturbing the attention of the reader, and ſtood ſtill to hear him read. The paſſage that he was reading, was, *and Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh; as it is ſaid to this day, in the mount of the* LORD *it ſhall be ſeen.* Gen. xxii. 14.

CUSHI ſaid unto him, underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt? The good man ſtarted up in a ſurprize, and ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me; and he deſired CUSHI to ſit down with him. I am glad, ſaid CUSHI, to find thee bleſſed with a ſenſe of thy native ignorance, and endowed with a teachable ſpirit. Pride will not ſubmit to learn of thoſe whom GOD hath taught. I think a teachable ſpirit is one of the characteriſtics of a child of grace. The Jewiſh Phariſees, who were wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight, refuſed the tuition of GOD the Saviour, *became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh hearts were darkened; profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools.* GOD has determined to deſtroy all grounds of boaſting, and to ſtain the pride of all human glory. Hence it is, that the Prophet Iſaiah foretold that GOD would take away all truſt in *the mighty man, and the man of war; the judge, and the prophet; and the prudent, and the ancient; the captain of fifty; and the honourable man; and the counſellor, and the cunning artificer; and the eloquent orator; and that he would*

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give children to be their princes, and babes ſhould rule over them. Iſa. iii. 2, 3, 4, 5. Men of great natural or acquired parts can never ſubmit, without humbling grace, to yield obedience to (what one calls) the fooliſhneſs of the croſs.

However, the Prophet ſays, *whom ſhall* God *teach knowledge? And whom ſhall he make to underſtand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breaſts; for precept muſt be upon precept; precept upon precept; line upon line; line upon line; here a little, and there a little.* Iſaiah xxviii. 9, 10. This is an humbling declaration for *a counſellor, an aſtrologer, a ſtar-gazer, or a monthly prognoſticator, to regard.* Iſa. xlvii. 13. But as Paul ſays, *if any man will be wiſe, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe.*

But to give my dear brother an account of this mountain, on which we ſit: I believe it to be *Mount Moriah*, which, perhaps, may ſignify the *Lord revealing*. If it does, it ſhews how thoſe ſouls are exalted, whom the Lord condeſcendeth to teach, to whom he reveals his mind and will, though it be attended with bitterneſs, which may be included in the word *Moriah*. Mount Calvary you ſee, is almoſt oppoſite, where our Lord was crucified; and he whom God teacheth on Mount Moriah, is ſure to have ſome views of what was done on Mount Calvary. *The mountains ſhall bring peace to the people and the little hills by righteouſneſs.* Pſalm lxxii. 3. The grand deſign of divine teaching is, firſt, that we may know God in his law to

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be an holy, juſt GOD; and ſecondly, that we may know him reconciled in his ſon; as a GOD reconciled to ſinners. The goſpel reveals him, *And this is life eternal, to know the only true* GOD, *and* JESUS CHRIST *whom he hath ſent.* Hence the goſpel is called the word of reconciliation.

AHIMAAZ. If this is Mount Moriah, it is the very ſpot where GOD gave teſtimony to Abraham's faith, even from Heaven; and to be ſure he muſt aſcend this Mount with as heavy an heart as a mortal could carry. But GOD often lays the greateſt burden on the faith of his favourites, juſt before he intends a deliverance. As ſpeaketh the LORD by Moſes, that he will appear *when he ſeeth that his people's power is gone, that there is none ſhut up or left.* Deut. xxxii. 36. And ſuch conſpicuous deliverances have a bleſſed tendency to endear GOD to his people, and excite their love and gratitude; and I doubt not but this was the caſe with Abraham. The thoughts of ſlaying his beloved ſon muſt go near his heart, and the ſimple expreſſions of Iſaac, when he ſaid, *where is the lamb for the burnt offering*, muſt touch Abraham's feelings very ſenſibly. But when he received his little one back to his arms, and obtained an articulate teſtimony of the love and approbation of his Maker, it muſt lift him as high in joy and heavenly-mindedneſs, as the thoughts of ſlaying him had ſunk him in ſorrow.

CUSHI. I am glad to find thee, my brother, ſuch an obſerver of the gracious dealing of GOD.

If

If believers were to obſerve the various frames, changes, and deliverances that paſs on their ſouls, and bring them to the word of GOD, they would be more comfortably eſtabliſhed in the truth than they are.

Many gracious ſouls are ſtrict obſervers of external forms, and modes of worſhip, to which they are led by the *wiſdom* of men, and prejudiced in favour of, by the *bigotry* of men, inſtead of adhering to an experience on their own ſouls. *Let every man prove his own work*, ſaith Paul, *then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf, and not in another*; that is, he ſhall rejoice in the power of GOD, not in the wiſdom of men.

I believe Abraham had the ſweeteſt views and ſenſations on this Mount, that ever he had in all his pilgrimage. His ſon Iſaac was a ſweet type of CHRIST, the promiſed ſeed in *whom all nations were to be bleſſed.* The wood that Abraham laid in ſuch particular order, prefigured the croſs. The intended victim laid on the wood, repreſented the bleſſed JESUS, the meek and paſſive lamb, ſubmitting to be nailed to the accurſed tree. Abraham's *knife* ſhadowed forth the *flaming ſword of juſtice*, once ſeen by our firſt parents at the *eaſt gate of Eden.* By Abraham's parental love and affection for his ſon, the immutable love of GOD was exhibited, who ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten ſon, *John* iii. 16. freely offering him up for us all. Abraham's joyful reception of his ſon (as it were from the dead) typified the cordial

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reception of CHRIST into the boſom of GOD the father. As Iſaac prefigured CHRIST as a *lamb*, and as the *promiſed ſeed* that ſhould come, ſo the *ram* prefigured CHRIST as the *everlaſting father* of all his *ſheep*.

The *horns* of the *ram* repreſented CHRIST's kingly power; his being *hung by the horns in the thicket of buſhes*, ſhewed the ſubmiſſion of the Omnipotent Saviour to the wicked hands of men, who are compared to *briers* and *thorns*. Cant. ii. 2. *Thorns* being badges of GOD's curſe, ſhewed his being made a curſe for us; and that he was to be crowned with thorns, was typified by the ram's being hung in the thorns by his head.—Thus Abraham's faith ſaw the Saviour, both in his *beloved ſon*, and in the *bleeding and burning ram*; and to this agrees the LORD himſelf: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day; and he ſaw it and was glad.* John viii. 56.

AHIMAAZ. It is a pretty light, my brother, that you have caſt on that text; and the proof that you brought from the Saviour's mouth, is a confirmation of what you have ſaid. But ſome of the learned tell us, that we ſhould be very careful how we allegorize and ſpiritualize the ſcriptures, leſt we get into the regions of fancy. Though I do believe there are many in our days who are ſtigmatized enthuſiaſts and fanatics, who are bleſſed with divine tuition, and wonderfully ſupported by the Holy Ghoſt; there is no limiting GOD, nor drawing lines for him to work by; and I believe

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the heart that feels the keeneſt pierce from juſtice, is the moſt ſenſible of the balm of mercy. Where conviction draws the deepeſt furrow, the *incorruptible ſeed* will take the *deepeſt root*.

Such ſouls as experience the greateſt change, have generally the brighteſt views of divine revelation. The darkeſt clouds are often ſucceeded by the brighteſt manifeſtations. God *diſcovereth deep things out of darkneſs, and bringeth out to light the ſhadow of death*. Job xii. 22. And ſuch ſouls will ever be found to be the moſt ſpiritually minded, and the moſt heavenly in their converſation.

Cushi. I have heard of men giving ſuch cautions, and of warning people againſt allegorizing the word of God, or giving it a ſpiritual meaning; when I have thought that too many legalize the goſpel, and make it more like a law than a covenant of grace; and make the Saviour more a law-giver, than a law-fulfiller, by talking more of the commands of Christ, than of the infinite ſatisfaction made to law and juſtice by him.

This is a kind of *remedial law*, as ſome term it; ſuch being ignorant of the *killing* power of the covenant of works; and ſtrangers to the *conſtraining* power of the covenant of grace, have ſet up one of their own, in the very throne of the great Mediator, as a rival to him, who is the *end of the law*, and the *author of faith*.

What good can accrue to ſinners, from a law of human invention, ſet up in the place of the Mediator, is hard to tell. Iſrael would have been con-

conſumed by the fire of GOD's jealouſy, more than once, if *Moſes*, the typical *mediator*, and *Phineas*, the typical *high prieſt*, had not ſtood in the gap, or breach, that their rebellion had made between GOD and them. But how a *goſpel law* of human manufactory is to fill a breach of infinite dimenſions, and bring about a ſpiritual union and likeneſs, where there is an infinite diſproportion, is a myſtery that I deſpair of ever finding out; and a myſtery that all the divines in the world can never explain to me.

But this concluſion we may warrantably draw, that if *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, could not ſtand before GOD, to make up the breach, we are ſure no contrivance of man can do it. Beſides, this law of human wiſdom lays no weight upon him that is *mighty to ſave*; but the whole burden of conditions is laid on them that are dead to GOD, and without ſtrength; and how the dead in ſin are to perform ſuch conditions, is another riddle which can never be explained.

The ſpouſe, under the old œconomy, received many conſolations from the types and ſhadows, while ſhe eyed her beloved Saviour as the object of her future hopes; ſhe calls the two covenants her two breaſts, and eyed the Mediator as the end of the law, and the author of faith, and had light enough under that dark diſpenſation, to ſee that no day's man was fit to make up the breach, but him. Feeling his love, ſhe ſays, *A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he ſhall lie all night betwixt*

betwixt my breaſts. Song, i. 13. Her faith viewing him as the fulfiller of the law, and the glory of the goſpel, ſhe reſts ſatisfied with the ſanctuary ſervice, *until the bleſſed period* ſhould arrive, when her beloved LORD ſhould be revealed. *Until the day-break, and the ſhadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of Myrrh, and to the Hill of Frankincenſe.* Song, iv. 6.

As for the caution againſt allegorizing and ſpiritualizing the word of GOD, I ſee the Saviour and his apoſtles perpetually at it.

Solomon's preference given to the lowly mind, *in the preſence of the prince*, Prov. xxv. 7. is brought in by the Saviour as a check to the pride of Phariſees, in their choice of the higheſt ſeats, and is intended to ſhew, how he differs from the humbled believer, who, like the prodigal Son, begins his religion with a ſenſe of the plague of his own heart, and a keen hunger for the bread of Heaven, before he ſits down to feaſt on the fatted calf. Luke xv.

ELIHU's comparing his heart, filled with divine inſpiration, to a *bottle that had no vent*, Job xxxii. 19. is brought in by the Saviour to ſhew the neceſſity of a new heart, and a new ſpirit; *but new wine muſt be put into new bottles, and both are preſerved.* Matt. ix. 17.

Job's deſcription of the eagle, *Job* xxxix. 30, is introduced by the LORD to ſhew the deſtruction of Jeruſalem under the Roman eagle; but much more to ſhew the entertainment of heavenly

venly minds, who by faith *feed on his own flesh and blood, as their spiritual meat and drink*, John vi. 53; and sweetly prefigures the certain protection of the elect beneath the shadow of his wings in the great and terrible day.

The two mountains mentioned by Moses, *Gerizim* and *Ebal*, Deut. xxvii. 12, are an allegory. *Mount Gerizim*, where the blessings were to be pronounced, prefigured the *Church of Christ*, on which the Spirit of GOD pronounces the benediction, and was a figure of *mount Zion*; *for there the* LORD *commanded the blessing, even life for evermore*, Psalm cxxxiii. 3.

Mount *Ebal*, from which the *curses* were to be pronounced, prefigured *mount Sinai*, where the law and its curse were given, and is *Hagar* in the allegory, and *agreeth with Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children*, Gal. iv. 24, 25, and reaches to every work-monger in the whole world,—*for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse*, Gal. iii. 10; and so it will appear in the great day, when the Judge will say to Zion (on which himself was crowned King), *Come, ye blessed of my father*;—and to *Hagar, and her bond children* (who rejected his reign), *Go, ye cursed*; these two will appear to be mount *Gerizim* and mount *Ebal* with a witness; and there the blessing and the curse will remain to all eternity.

AHIMAAZ. The things which you have mentioned, my brother, are consistent with the ana-

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logy of faith, and your method is well calculated to bring the word of God down to a holy familiarity with the weakeſt believer; which certainly is a method that every man of God ought to adopt, or aim at, more than ſhewing his human learning, or knowledge of the languages; for Paul ſays, *he would ſooner ſpeak five words to the edification of the church, than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue.* 1 Cor. xiv. 19. For as he obſerves, an unintelligible teacher *is a barbarian to the people*, which made the Apoſtle determine to uſe *great plainneſs of ſpeech.* 2 Cor. iii. 12. And to be ſure I have often felt the binding effects of legalizing the goſpel myſelf, ſince I ſet out in the paths of wiſdom; and have been entangled more than once by their legal miniſtry. Gal. v. 1.

But as for you, my brother, you have certainly great natural parts, a very ſtrong memory, and have been very ſtudious in the ſcriptures; this is plain, for you appear a ready ſcribe, well inſtructed in the law.

Cushi. I believe men of the greateſt natural parts in all the world, are at this time either *deiſts* or *atheiſts*. The greateſt *ſcholars* are in the greateſt *confuſion*—the moſt *ſtudious men* are the moſt ignorant of God—and thoſe of the *ſtrongeſt memory* are the moſt freighted with the rubbiſh of heatheniſm. The greateſt natural *logician* is the fartheſt from the baſis of *ſound reaſon*; and he that is *wiſeſt in his own conceit*, is the greateſt enemy to the wiſdom of God.

Natural abilities are the gift of GOD; and if they are not influenced by the Holy Ghoſt, they are always turned againſt the giver. But the ſpiritual man will own with Paul, that if a man be wiſe in divine myſteries, the word of wiſdom is given him. If diſcerning, it is in divine light that he ſees light. If ſtable in confidence, the word of faith is given him. If divinely knowing, the word of knowledge is given him. If ſtrong in memory, it is the *Spirit that brings all things to his remembrance, whatſoever the* LORD *hath ſaid unto him.* All theſe things worketh that one, and the ſelf-ſame ſpirit, dividing his gifts ſeverally as he will. 1 *Cor.* xii. 11. *God will never give the glory* of his grace to men's brains, nor *his praiſe to graven images.* Iſa. xlii. 8.

AHIMAAZ. True, my brother; *every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableneſs, or ſhadow of turning.* James i. 17. And every gracious man will acknowledge this to the honour of the great benefactor; for, as the prophet ſays, *let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, nor the mighty man in his might; nor the rich man in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me; that I am the* LORD, *which exerciſe loving kindneſs, judgment, and righteouſneſs in the earth; for in theſe things I delight, ſaith the* LORD. Jer. ix. 24. And indeed I have always found the moſt pure liberty, the greateſt love, and the greateſt encouragement to confi-

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dence in God, miniſtered to my ſoul from ſuch pure and evangelical converſation as yours. But I would wiſh to be led by the voice of my teachers, and ſo to ſteer between the two extremes. For my part, I am for the middle way.

Cushi. I do not rightly underſtand thee, my brother. If by way, you mean the way to God, the middle way is one of your own deviſing.—There are but two ways to Heaven that God has deviſed; the one is by perfect, ſpiritual, and perpetual obedience, agreeable to the command.—*He that doth theſe things, even he ſhall live in them. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* The other way is, by faith in Christ, which Paul calls *the new and living way which* God *the Saviour hath conſecrated through the veil; that is to ſay, his fleſh.* Heb. x. 20.

Theſe are the only two ways that lead to life, that are opened in the ſcriptures; therefore, he that deviſes a *middle way*, is in reality a deſpiſer of both. If a man will enter into life by works, his righteouſneſs muſt be a perfect conformity to the law. This muſt be his legal righteouſneſs; and if perfect, it gives him a legal right. The goſpel righteouſneſs is one ready wrought out by the ſurety, and received by faith, both which muſt be brought from the law.

The phariſee, he ſticks to the old covenant, and truſts in *his own merit*, being too proud to beg. The ſenſible ſinner, he is humbled to receive the wedding garment, as the gift of God.

The way to GOD, by faith in CHRIST, *Paul calls the new and living way*, to ſhew that the other is both dead and old; and indeed, it is a way that none but the Saviour ever went to GOD in.

The flaming ſword has cut off all that ever attempted to touch the tree of life in that way.—*By the deeds of the law ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified.* Therefore the middle way that my brother ſpeaks of, is a way that was never caſt up by any of the ſervants of GOD. The law ſays to all that are under the law, there is none righteous, no not one. GOD will never meet any ſinner (as a reconciled GOD) in that way: *He meeteth none but thoſe that rejoice, and work righteouſneſs, and thoſe that remember him in his way.* Iſaiah lxiv. 5.

Never attempt an entrance where GOD has never opened a door; the end of ſuch, according to Peter, will be worſe than their beginning; for, as he ſays, it had been better for them not to have known the right way at all. The father dwelleth in me, and I in him, ſays CHRIST, and CHRIST crucified is the only way to the father. I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the father, but by me.

The prophets and apoſtles laboured hard to clear and caſt up this highway; and thoſe that GOD guides into it, are to ſay, *caſt ye up, caſt ye up, prepare the way, take up the ſtumbling blocks out of the way of my people.* Iſaiah lvii. 14, 62, 10.

As thou haſt received CHRIST JESUS the LORD, ſo walk ye in him, and never aim at a middle

path.

path. God complains of this, and ſays, *my people have forgotten me; they have burned incenſe to vanity; and they have cauſed them to ſtumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths in a way not caſt up.* Jer. xviii. 15.

Ahimaaz. You ſeem to be quite an original; that is, you are for the pure old apoſtolic religion, and for a perſeverance in ſpiritual worſhip, in the naked ſimplicity and truth of the goſpel; which is certainly right, and I believe that the main current of ſcripture runs in your channel.—Thoſe who watch the Spirit's teaching, and compare it with the word of God, and who find the approbation of God with them, and the teſtimony of a good conſcience, certainly walk the ſafeſt, and will find the moſt ſenſible ſupport from the Almighty in a trying hour.

Your converſation is very ſpiritual, and very entertaining to me. It brings a deal of my paſt experience freſh to my mind; and, for my part, I know not when I have met with ſo agreeable a companion, nor when I have ſpent ſo comfortable an hour.

Cushi. It is to be lamented that there appears ſo little ſpiritual converſation among profeſſing people. Heavenly converſation, cheerfully delivered, keeps the word of God alive in one's heart. It cauſes it to dwell richly there, in all utterance, in all knowledge, and ſpiritual underſtanding. It ſtirs up the gift of God that is in a man; and the more ſuch an one ſcattereth the

truth, the more he *encreaſeth* his ſtock. Prov. xi. 24. So that the ſpeaker is edified, as well as the hearer; for, as Solomon ſays, *he that watereth, ſhall be watered alſo himſelf.* Prov. xi. 25.

AHIMAAZ. True, my brother; but all the children of GOD have not that experience and judgment that you ſeem to be favoured with. There are many hoping ſouls that cannot find words to expreſs a reaſon of their hope. They are baſhful, timorous, and perplexed with many doubts and fears; and they are fearful of ſpeaking wrong, or laying a preſumptuous claim to that which they have no right to, as the tempter often ſuggeſts.

Beſides, there are many profeſſors who have more head-knowledge, than heart-felt experience, and theſe often criticiſe and contradict the ſimple liſpings of a babe in grace; and when they have been ſerved ſo a few times, they are like parrots, you cannot make them talk again.

CUSHI. That is what I never liked. I have often heard ſtrange muddy language from a young Chriſtian; but I never choſe to ſtop his mouth if I found but the leaſt ſavour with it; for although the great *I* is brought in at every ſentence, as the chief agent, yet after they have had a few falls, I have obſerved that the great *pronoun* has been left quite out of the queſtion, except it has appeared in its proper place, in declaring what evil *they* have done, or what free grace has done for them. In this GOD fulfils his promiſe, *by turning*

to the people a pure language. Zeph. iii. 9. Poor Peter loſt the great *I* in *Satan's ſieve*, and ſo do others; but as for criticizing their words, and contradicting of them, it is very wrong. When weak believers have been ſerved ſo, they will act with their tongue, as a young child does with its feet; after they have deceived it once or twice, it will hang about the mother, and you cannot make it venture upon them again.

For my part, I am very fond of having a weak believer in company. He, and the poor ſenſible ſinner, the diligent ſeeker, and the earneſt enquirer, are the people that the old Chriſtian finds the greateſt liberty with, as may be ſeen in Ezekiel's miniſtry. He ſtands dumb before a carnal multitude of lifeleſs profeſſors, without a word to ſay. *I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou ſhalt be dumb, and ſhalt not be to them a reprover.* Ezek. iii. 26.

But to the young believer, who had fled to the God of Iſrael for refuge, his tongue was looſed. *In that day ſhall thy mouth be opened to him which is eſcaped, and thou ſhalt ſpeak and be no more dumb.*— Ezek. xxiv. 27.

Our great apoſtle boaſted of this. O ye Corinthians, our mouth is *opened unto you—our heart is enlarged.* 2 Cor. vi. 11. But in Rome he found his ſpirit chained, and his tongue fettered; and therefore he ſolicits an intereſt in the Epheſians *prayers for him, that utterance might be given him—that he might open his mouth boldly to make*

known the myſtery of the goſpel, for which he was an ambaſſador in bonds, that therein he might ſpeak boldly as he ought to ſpeak. Eph. vi. 19, 20.

AHIMAAZ. It is true, my brother; we generally find young believers the moſt thirſty after divine knowledge; and the moſt attentive to the lips of wiſdom; and as the prophet ſays, the prieſts lips ſhould preſerve knowledge, that *enquiring ſouls may ſeek the law at his mouth.* Malachi ii. 7.—Yet you know they are not capable of holding up an argument, or carrying on ſpiritual converſation, which is the point that you are inſiſting upon.

CUSHI. I would ſooner be in company with a *young and a wiſe child, than with an old and fooliſh King, who will no more be admoniſhed.* Eccl. iv. 13. Our Saviour's company conſiſted altogether of ſuch weaklings; and one half of the parables left upon record, were drawn from the mouth of the Saviour by ſimple enquiry. By their aſking him queſtions, they *drew water with joy out of that well of ſalvation.* Iſa. xii. 3.

—And I wiſh there was a little more of this in practice in our days. Many young Chriſtians would be uſeful to old ones, by ſtirring up the well-ſpring of life in them; and would, at the ſame time, find their own bowels refreſhed, by the ſpiritual counſel, advice, or inſtructions, which themſelves might draw. The eſtabliſhed Chriſtian that has drunk into the Saviour's ſpirit, has a divine ſpring within him, which is often low for

want

want of thirſty babes to draw it out. The LORD has promiſed, *that whoſoever cometh unto him, and drinks, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water; if the weak believer would grow, let him draw.* John vii. 37, 38.

And on the other hand, an experienced miniſter, by being in company with young believers, and obſerving their queſtions and anſwers, gets a more ſatisfactory reaſon of the hope that is in them, then he can get at an appointed church meeting; for which they have prepared themſelves by premeditation; and are often abaſhed and confounded by an audience.

AHIMAAZ. It is a great bleſſing to a young Chriſtian to have an experienced paſtor to attend on, in his doubtful ſtate; for the impreſſions of GOD's laws on a ſinner's heart, are as difficult to read, as the hand-writing on the wall of Belſhazzar's palace. The king *trembled when he ſaw the fingers that wrote.* Dan. v. 5. And we tremble no leſs when we feel the *hand-writing that is againſt us.* Col. ii. 14. And he that becomes an *interpreter, as Elihu was to Job,* muſt have the ſpirit of GOD in him; for *'tis the inſpiration of the Almighty that muſt give him underſtanding.* Job xxxii. 8.

The queen of Babylon ſaw the need of this, when ſhe perceived the emptineſs and ignorance of the aſtrologers and Chaldeans. *There is a man,* ſaid ſhe, *in thy kingdom, in whom is the ſpirit of the Holy Gods* [implying that the ſpirit of unholy devils was in the others], *and in the days of thy father*

ther light and underſtanding and wiſdom, like the wiſdom of the Gods, was found in him; whom the King, Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, the King, I ſay, thy father, made maſter of the magicians, aſtrologers, Chaldeans, and ſoothſayers; for as much as an excellent ſpirit, and knowledge, and underſtanding, interpreting of dreams, and ſhewing of hard ſentences; and diſſolving of doubts were found in the ſame Daniel, whom the King named Belſhazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will ſhew the interpretation. Dan. v. 11, 12.

This woman has drawn a moſt excellent portrait of a miniſter of the ſpirit; and as ſhe found the need of ſuch a ſpirit in her huſband's confuſion, ſo many fooliſh virgins, who now call inſpiration enthuſiaſm, will, in the great and terrible day of the LORD, call for the ſame inſpiration; *give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.* Solomon calls the divine impreſſions of GOD's laws, made by the ſpirit of GOD, *deep waters.*

CUSHI. Yea, and when theſe deep waters are ſtirred by a ſpiritual converſation, they will ſpring up, and influence both the affections and the tongue of the ſpeaker as they riſe. *Counſel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of underſtanding will draw it out.* Prov. xx. 5.—And as theſe waters are drawn forth, ſo they refreſh, ſtrengthen, purify, and comfort others that hear the converſation; as ſpeaketh the wiſe man: *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters; and the well-ſpring of wiſdom as a flowing brook.* Prov. xviii.

xviii. 4.—An experimental believer has always ſomething to ſay, when young Chriſtians aſk him queſtions; for the *heart of the wiſe teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.* Prov. xvi. 23.

Ahimaaz. Indeed, my brother, I feel the bleſſed effects of what you aſſert on my own ſpirit, for I find my underſtanding much enlightened into the word of God, my heart is enlarged, my affections are warmed, my bowels are refreſhed, and my judgment much eſtabliſhed. For my part, I never met with ſo precious a companion before. Such converſation leaves no guilt on the conſcience; it does not ſend one home with a ſecret ſting, as has too often been the caſe with me, when I have left a company that had nothing to diſcourſe about but worldly matters. I have felt the wretched effects of it afterwards in my cloſet, when I have come to face God in prayer; while on the other hand, divine converſe furniſhes the mind with a ſuitable frame for prayer and praiſe; and I think this is Solomon's meaning, when he ſays, *A man ſhall be ſatisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth.* Prov. xii. 14. But what would ſome think of this converſation of ours. I believe it would appear mere nonſenſe to many of our learned Maſters of Arts.

Cushi. As for *Maſter of Arts*, it appears to me an *arrogant title*. *Profeſſor of Arts* would ſound much better; for there is a myſtery in every art that has puzzled the beſt of them, and ever will. *Known unto* God *are all his works from the beginning.*

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He is the grand maſter of all; and in the ſtricteſt ſenſe there is no other; becauſe there are ſo many myſteries in every art that they are not maſters of. Hence I have often thought that *A. M.* and *M. A.* have ſtood for two lies. The beſt art is divinity; and I believe this is one of the laſt that many young ſtudents are put to the ſtudy of. They muſt be filled with heathenism firſt; and if GOD calls them by grace, their heathen ſtock ſerves for fuel, into which the devil often throws his darts, by tempting them to Atheiſm and Deiſm. The man that knows GOD, and himſelf, is the happieſt, the wiſeſt, the moſt uſeful, and always will appear the brighteſt character in the world: For it is ſaid that the King of Babylon communed with ſuch, *and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah; therefore ſtood they before the King: And in all matters of wiſdom and underſtanding that the King required of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and aſtrologers that were in all his realm.* Dan. ii. 19, 20.

The beſt botaniſt in the world is that man that can give the moſt ſaving deſcription of the *tree of life*, that bleſſed *plant of renown.* Ezek. xxxiv. 29. Job tells you the root of it was found in him. *Job* xix. 28. Paul ſays, the wild Gentiles were grafted into it, and partook of its fatneſs. *Rom.* xi. 19. John ſays, *the leaves of it are for the healing of the nations*;—compare Rev. xxii. 2. with Iſaiah liii. 5. Ezekiel tells us, *the*

fruit

fruit thereof ſhall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine, Ezek. xlvii. 12; and the ſpouſe tells us its branches are for a ſhadow, *Song* ii. 3. The LORD favour you and me with an heart-felt union with this tree, then ſhall our leaf never wither, nor ſhall we ceaſe from yielding fruit: *He that abideth in me and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit;—for without me ye can do nothing.*

Indeed the Chriſtian has ſomething to do with various arts. He is an aſtronomer when he has found out the bright and morning ſtar, *Rev.* xxii. 16, and ſenſibly felt it *riſe in his heart*, 2 Pet. i. 19. This bleſſed light is ſucceeded by the heat of the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhining on the ſoul *with healing in his beams*, Mal. iv. 2. The beſt ſtar that ever the eaſtern ſages found, was that which led them to Bethlehem, where the Star of Jacob lay. *Numb.* xxiv. 17. We may ſay the ſame of all other arts. God make us ſuch navigators as ſhall gain the haven of everlaſting reſt; and ſuch geographers as ſhall find out the *new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs*. Bleſſed be that philoſopher that has found the pearl of great price; and for ever bleſſed be that anatomiſt that has crucified and diſſected the old man, with his affections and luſts. And is not that man the beſt prognoſticator, that, from the teſtimony of a good conſcience, can ſay with the Pſalmiſt—*he ſhall guide me with his counſel, and receive me into glory*; if ſo, then

then I take it for granted that he alſo will be found to be the beſt builder at laſt, *who has heard the goſpel and obeyed it; and, like a wiſe maſter-builder, has dug deep and founded his faith and hope on the Rock of Iſrael; when the rains deſcend, and the winds blow, and the floods come and beat violently upon that houſe, it could not be moved, becauſe it was founded upon a rock.* Luke vi. 48. All arts and ſciences beſides theſe, will be of little uſe in the day of judgment; and as they have a tendency to lift graceleſs men up with pride, and to ſet them above the pure and ſimple word of GOD, they are not worthy of the name of wiſdom, as ſpeaketh the prophet: *The wiſe men are aſhamed, they are diſmayed and taken: Lo, they have rejected the word of the* LORD, *and what wiſdom is there in them?* Jer. viii. 9.

GOD, as the GOD of nature, hath given many excellent gifts and parts to men, though fallen. Beauty, wit, ſkill, and wonderful ingenuity, as may be ſeen in the writings of Atheiſts, Deiſts, and other heathens; but, without preventing-grace be given, they are ſure to be exerciſed to the diſhonour of the bountiful giver. The greateſt part of our univerſity education conſiſts in plundering the natural abilities of heathens. I have obſerved men, of acquired learning, who have diſcourſed with the ſublimity of a Homer, yet at the ſame time ſeemed as deſtitute of natural and ſpiritual abilities as Peter the wild boy, who was found in the woods of Hanover.

Hanover. Such only ſhine in the natural abilities of others; and their borrowed language, from the native idiot, is as diſtinguiſhable as the parrot's plumb from the perſon's voice which it mimicks; for, as the wiſe man ſaith, *excellent ſpeech becometh not a fool.* Prov. xvii. 7.

Ahimaaz. To be ſure there are no acquirements like the pure gifts which flow from God, who is the giver of every good and of every perfect gift; and when God gives grace to ſanctify a natural gift, then it is of great uſe;—*a man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.* Prov. xviii. 16. And certainly it is a great bleſſing to the church of God, while Christ, the *ſtone of help*, is the ſubſtance of the gift, and uſed in the awakening of ſinners, and eſtabliſhing of ſaints: *A gift is as a precious ſtone in the eyes of him that hath it; whitherſoever it turneth it proſpereth.* Prov. xvii. 8. And for my part I have read many volumes of learned and gracious men's nervous reaſonings againſt error, and erroneous men; ſuch as volumes of ſermons to prove the being of a God, the authenticity of the Scriptures, the reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian religion, &c. which I could never get either eſtabliſhment or comfort from.

Cushi. The volumes of ſermons, and other treatiſes, that have been written to prove the being of a God, have brought many to doubt of ſuch a being, where no doubt ever roſe before about it. And as for proving the authenticity of

of Scripture by ſcholaſtic reaſoning, it is like lighting of a taper to find out the ſun when he ſhines in his meridian. All ſyſtems of error that have ever been publiſhed are like *Ahab's harneſs*—there are always joints enough left open for the arrow of vengeance; the word of GOD is ſufficient to marr every falſe ſyſtem however compiled, and that GOD will let them know when he ſweeps away the refuges of lies.

The natural propenſity of a man to ſin againſt the light of nature,—the guilt that he is perpetually ſtung with,—the fear of death and judgment that he is always in bondage to,—the checks that he feels before the commiſſion of ſin,—the violence that he is obliged to offer to his conſcience afterwards,—the reflections that he often makes,—and the judgments that appear abroad in the earth, &c. &c. are quite ſufficient, not only to prove the exiſtence of GOD, but the cognizance that he daily takes both of them and their actions. And this is ſufficient alſo to prove the authenticity of his word; for there is not a corruption that ſtirs in man's heart,—not a laſcivious thought that roves on his mind,—not a crime that he commits,—not a cogitation that he feels,—nor a judgment that he fears, but what are diſcovered by a divine ray in the ſecret oracles, and flaſh many awful convictions on the conſcience of every tranſgreſſor. This ſhews the law written in their heart; and if an appeal to GOD, to ſcripture, to conſcience, to creation,

creation, and to the accompliſhment of the prophecies, are not ſufficient to convince them, ſcholaſtic reaſoning will hardly do it. The man that will daringly deny the hourly verdict of his thoughts, and the perpetual deciſion of his own conſcience, is more hardened than the devil himſelf; for Satan never denied the conviction that he felt, nor the vengeance he feared, in all the outcry that he made in the days of our LORD's miniſtry. There is not an erroneous man in all the world but what fulfils ſome part or other of the Scriptures. God has promiſed to *ſend ſtrong deluſions that men may believe a lie*, and be damned for rejecting the truth, and taking pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs; therefore I think ſuch deſperate ſinners are not worth the notice of a divine; *they are ſubverted, and ſin, being condemned of their own conſcience*, Tit. iii. 11; and *to reprove ſuch ſcorners, is to get one's ſelf a blot.* Prov. ix. 7.

The ALMIGHTY, as the GOD of Salvation, can never be diſcovered in his gracious purpoſes but in his own rays; as ſaith our bleſſed apoſtle, *For* GOD, *who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of* GOD *in the face of* JESUS CHRIST. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

AHIMAAZ. My dear brother, I never felt my ſoul ſo ſweetly entertained and eſtabliſhed in my life, as I have by your converſation. I have often wiſhed to know the mind and will of GOD in many of theſe particulars which you have

 mentioned;

mentioned; you are as Elihu was to Job, *according to my wiſh in* God's *ſtead*, Job xxxiii. 6; for I am like the two diſconſolate diſciples when the Saviour overtook them, and opened up, explained, and applied the Scriptures, till their *hearts burned within them*. And indeed if you had not ſpoken againſt the ſufficiency of human learning, I ſhould have thought you a profeſſor of the languages, a doctor of divinity, a maſter of arts, a critical reviewer, an antiquarian, and a fellow of the royal ſociety.

Cushi. You may take me juſt as you pleaſe. I profeſs ſomething of the *language of Canaan*; and I think he is the beſt doctor that is the moſt uſeful to ſouls; a ſound divine is a profeſſor of the beſt art; the man that knows truth from error is a valuable critic; he that has made his calling and election ſure, is a good antiquarian; and he that is found in faith, is a fellow of that ſociety that is *divinely and eternally royal*. 1 Pet ii. 9. Rev. v. 10.

Ahimaaz. I perceive thou art a man of humour, as well as a man of grace, and certainly have a competent meaſure of natural abilities, as well as a profound experience; this I think appears plain to any obſerver; and as God has been pleaſed to ſend both into a miniſterial channel; I believe they will appear much to his own honour, the good of his people, and to the confuſion of the enemies of his cauſe.

Cushi.

Cushi. What I am, I am by creation and grace; you may diſcover me better than I can diſcover myſelf. But be aſſured of this, that there never was five pounds laid out upon me for human poliſhing ſince I have been in the world; nor is my deficiency in human learning any impediment in the way of uſefulneſs. If God the Holy Ghoſt prepares a man's heart, and takes poſſeſſion of it, he will create the fruit of the lip alſo, and give that man *a mouth and wiſdom that all his adverſaries ſhall never be able to gainſay or reſiſt*. And for my part I have often thought that human learning has robbed God of one-half of the glory that is due to him. I have read *Cave's Lives of the Fathers* till my heart has heaved at the work, to ſee how the creature has been exalted. The leading account of every character is the piety of their anceſtors; juſt as if grace was hereditary: Secondly, their aptneſs to outſtrip all others in human learning: Thirdly, their mortifying their bodies in a cave; juſt as if the devil and the old man of ſin was not to be found in a cave, as well as in a city. And as for the Holy Ghoſt, he is hardly mentioned, though there is no ſuch thing as *mortifying any one deed of the fleſh* (to good purpoſe) *but through him*, Rom. viii. 13; and if grace be mentioned in that book, it is ſlightly touched juſt at the concluſion of a narrative.

Calamy's Life of Baxter is juſt ſuch another rotten jumble of human excellency. The Holy Ghoſt

is the regenerator, the renewer, and the ornamentor of every real Chriſtian; and if he be not glorified by us, we ſhall ſurely be debaſed by him; *for them that honour me I will honour, and they that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed*, 1 Sam. ii. 30; or, as the Saviour ſays, *he that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.* Matt. xxiii. 13.

AHIMAAZ. It is right, certainly, that GOD *in all things ſhould be glorified through* JESUS CHRIST. But allowances, my brother, muſt be made: Some Chriſtians have been drawn altogether by love, without any convictions at all; theſe, not feeling the plague of their hearts, nor the awful arreſt of divine juſtice, will remain of a legal tincture, and their language is far from being pure. Theſe are not properly evangelized,—they are not brought off from all confidence in the fleſh, conſequently they will not ſavour ſo ſweet of the dear Redeemer as thoſe who have been chaced by the terrors of law and juſtice to embrace him as their only refuge, and lay hold of him as the only hope ſet before them.

CUSHI. GOD is a free agent, and will work on his people as it pleaſeth him; but to be converted without repentance,—to be born again without ſoul travail,—to be forgiven without being convinced we have nothing to pay,—to be healed without feeling our ſickneſs,—and to be ſaved before we find ourſelves loſt—is a myſtery to me, and muſt remain ſo.

That

That God often begins to allure a ſoul by goſpel promiſes I do not deny; but ſuch generally find travail, and ſickneſs too, before they arrive at God's tabernacle, or dwell on his holy hill. I have obſerved ſome perſons, who have had their ſharpeſt ſtruggles with law and conſcience, even on their death beds; and the very pains of death have haſtened the pains of their ſpiritual birth, ſo that the birth of their ſouls juſt preceded the death of their bodies;—ſuch have gone to glory, full fraught with the cordials of divine conſolation. This I think agrees with the goſpel ſenſe of this text: *But when the people of the land ſhall come before the* Lord, *in the ſolemn feaſts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worſhip, ſhall go out by the way of the ſouth gate; and he that entereth by the way of the ſouth gate, ſhall go forth by the way of the north gate; he ſhall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but ſhall go forth over againſt it.* Ez. xlvi. 9. And although ſome, as you obſerve, are very legal, and ſavour too much of the fleſh, yet I believe, if they belong to God, that he will permit their fleſhly confidence ſo often to deceive them, that they will be led to feel after him, who makes his ſtrength perfect in our weakneſs; and as his bleſſed arm is made bare to them, they will be careful to ſpeak to the honour of him whoſe power they feel; thus he *turns to the people a pure language.*

Ahimaaz. I have formerly obſerved ſeveral things which you have mentioned; and while you

have been ſpeaking they have occurred freſh to my mind; but I have not been ſo ſtrict an obſerver of the works of GOD, and of the bleſſed teachings of the Holy Spirit, as you have, which is both my ſin and my loſs; as ſpeaketh the Pſalmiſt, *Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the* LORD, Pſalm cvii. 43; and the more the loving kindneſs of the LORD is ſeen, the more is the faith of a believer increaſed and encouraged. And ſometimes GOD permits an unbeliever to be forcibly ſtruck with real convictions, while he beholds the viſible hand of GOD in ſupporting and bringing his own children out of difficulties—as the Queen of Sheba was ſtruck at Solomon's wiſdom; their falſe hopes give way, and their language is like that of the Pſalmiſt, *I had fainted unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the* LORD *in the land of the living*. Pſalm xxvii. 13.

CUSHI. The man that watches the dealings of GOD with him, both in providence and grace, he ſhall find the LORD's promiſe daily verified—*I will*, ſays GOD, *make all my goodneſs paſs before thee*. Such watchful ſouls ſhall ſee many an obſtacle removed, many a precious promiſe turned up, many an intricate providence made ſtreight, many a knotty experience unriddled, many an enemy entangled in his own council, many a hint dropped for faith to catch, many a glorious beam to direct his ſteps, and many a ſweet drop of divine conſolation will be poured as an oil on his

his ſoul, which will diſſolve the ſtubborn heart, and divinely ſweeten and ſoften every unruly faculty: *Thus ſhall the man be bleſſed that feareth the* LORD, *and with favour will be compaſs him as with a ſhield.*

The penitential moan of Adam, as pathetic *Milton* paints it, is worth the notice of every tender-hearted Chriſtian: Book 11 L 349

This moſt afflicts me, that departing hence,
As from his face I ſhall be hid, depriv'd
His bleſſed count'nance; here I could frequent
With worſhip place by place where he vouchſaf'd
Preſence divine, and to my ſons relate,
On this mount he appear'd, under this tree
Stood viſible, among theſe pines his voice
I heard, here with him at this fountain talk'd:
So many grateful altars I would rear
Of graſſy turf, and pile up every ſtone
Of luſtre from the brook, in memory,
Or monument to ages, and thereon
Offer ſweet-ſmelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.
In yonder nether world where ſhall I ſeek
His bright appearances, or footſteps trace?
For though I fled him angry, yet recall'd
To life prolong'd and promis'd race, I now
Gladly behold though but his utmoſt ſkirts
Of glory, and far off his ſteps adore.

The anſwer is as ſweet as the other is moving:

—Doubt not but in valley and in plain 349
GOD is as here, and will be found alike
Preſent, and of his preſence many a ſign
Still following thee, ſtill compaſſing thee round
With goodneſs and paternal love, his face
Expreſs, and of his ſteps the track divine.

AHIMAAZ. Certainly a man cannot live in the fear of GOD, unleſs he doth conſider himſelf daily in the immediate preſence of him; and to feel his ſupporting hand, to enjoy the teſtimony of his Spirit, to find his approbation with one, and his power manifeſted in leading one on, and holding one up in the face of all oppoſition, enables a man to rejoice, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *the* LORD *is on my ſide, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* And I have often thought that GOD has, and ſtill doth, reveal himſelf by his Spirit to many ſouls in the world who have not the word of GOD preached to them by men; or, in other words, who have not the means of grace as we have; and I have at times got comfort from theſe thoughts with reſpect to the poor heathens.

CUSHI. As I obſerved before, GOD is a free agent; but I do not deſire to be wiſe above what is written. I have read the prophecies of the *ten Sibyls*, and certainly there is a deal of truth in them, though it be ſung with wild notes; and if they are allowed to be propheteſſes of the LORD, they are witneſſes in your favour. But our great Apoſtle doth not countenance you at all; *It is written*, ſaith he, *that whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the* LORD *ſhall be ſaved; how then ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed; and how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard; and how ſhall they hear without a preacher, and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent?* Rom. x. 14; and CHRIST ſays, *Preach the goſpel to every creature,*

creature, and he that believes ſhall be ſaved, and he that believes not ſhall be damned, Mark xvi. 16, 17; and again, *This goſpel muſt be preached in all the world for a witneſs, and then ſhall the end come.* Matt. xxiv. 14. I believe, if you and I were to travel throughout the heathen world, where they are deſtitute of the word of GOD, we ſhould never be able to find a ſoul converted to CHRIST; nor do I read that Paul found one in all his travels.

AHIMAAZ. I think, in ſome things, thou art rather too contracted, my brother; for my part, I would wiſh ever to poſſeſs an open and catholic ſpirit. I have obſerved many things in thy converſation that diſcover an unbecoming narrowneſs. Paul tells us that we *ſhould not be ſtreightened in our bowels, and he ſpeaks unto us, as to his children, that we ſhould be enlarged.* 2 Cor. vii. 12, 13. It was a ſweet ſpirit that GOD gave Solomon; it is ſaid that *he gave him enlargement of heart as the ſand that is upon the ſea ſhore.* 1 Kings, iv. 29. And this is what that eminent ſaint of GOD (I mean *Jabez*) prayed for; it was, *that* GOD *would bleſs him indeed, and enlarge his coaſt*, 1 Chron. iv. 10; and I hope GOD will favour thee with the ſame, my brother, for indeed a narrow, contracted, bigoted ſpirit is a very bad one.

CUSHI. I am much obliged to thee, but there are ſeveral expreſſions of yours which I object to. I have often thought that Moſes himſelf, if he was upon earth in our day, would be accuſed of a narrow ſpirit; for he declares to an audience of

ſix hundred thouſand ſouls, *Ye have ſeen all that the* LORD *did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharoah, and unto all his ſervants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have ſeen—the ſigns and thoſe great miracles; yet the* LORD *hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderneſs.* Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4, 5. This part of Moſes's doctrine would be cenſured in the preſent day as the effects of a contracted ſpirit; and certainly it differed much from the univerſal ſpirit of *Corah*, *Abiram*, and *Dathan*; for though Moſes declared Iſrael to be *blind, ignorant, and inſenſible*, yet they declared them all ſanctified, and in the preſence of GOD, and warmly rebuked the bigotry of Moſes and Aaron; *For they gathered themſelves together againſt Moſes, and againſt Aaron, and ſaid unto them, Ye take too much upon you, ſeeing all the congregation are holy every one of them, and the* LORD *is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourſelves above the congregation of the* LORD? Numb. xvi. 3. The contracted ſermon of Moſes, and the declaration of this catholic company, differs widely. Moſes declares them *blind* and *inſenſible*,—theſe declare them all *holy*, and GOD's *preſence* among them; but it happened with them according to the wiſe man's ſaying, *There is a juſt man* (as they ſuppoſed themſelves to be) *that periſheth in his righteouſneſs, and there is a wicked man* (as they ſuppoſed Moſes) *that prolongeth his life in his wickedneſs.* Eccl. vii. 15; and ſo it happened here—for

Moſes

Moſes outlived *Corah* and all his company. They periſhed from the congregation with all their candour,—they went into the pit alive with all that they had; while Moſes, with all his contracted ſpirit, died at the mouth of the ALMIGHTY; or, as it might be rendered, without offering any violence to the text, that GOD *kiſſed him to death.*

JESUS CHRIST himſelf was viewed as one of a contracted ſpirit, when he told the Nazarenes *that many widows were in Iſrael in the days of Elias, but to none of them was Elias ſent but to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow: And many lepers were in Iſrael in the time of Eliſha the prophet, and none of them were cleanſed, ſaving Naaman the Syrian.* Theſe ſovereign and diſcriminating acts of GOD appeared to the Saviour's audience as the effects of a contracted ſpirit, and therefore they were determined to *break his neck: And all they in the ſynagogue, when they heard theſe things, were filled with wrath, and roſe up and thruſt him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill* (whereon their city was built) *that they might* CAST HIM DOWN HEADLONG. *Luke* iv. 25—29. But the Scribes and Phariſees were of a more catholic ſpirit; for they excommunicated none unleſs he confeſſed the true faith of CHRIST: *For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confeſs that he was* CHRIST, *he ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue.* John ix. 21. Nor did the Phariſees preſume to anathematiſe any but the real elect

elect of GOD—*this people that know not the law are curſed.* John vii. 49. You ſee theſe open catholic clergy admitted all to their communion, but the Saviour and his few choſen followers. So the devil had full poſſeſſion of the ſynagogues, while the rulers and ſcribes defended their ſire, and ſtuck to his council: *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* John vii. 48. No, they adhered to their own progenitor; and it was not without cauſe that the Saviour ſaid unto them, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the luſt of your father ye will do.* John viii. 44.

AHIMAAZ. You are got quite into irony, my brother; there was no call for ſuch a tart reply. I only meant that Chriſtians ſhould judge charitably, and not entertain too contracted an opinion of a very few being ſaved; and by an open and catholic ſpirit, I mean, that we ſhould love all ranks of profeſſing people, though they differ from us in doctrines and worſhip; we ſhould ſpread a mantle of love over their errors, where we have reaſon to believe that the root of the matter is in them.

CUSHI. I deſire to love all *that love our* LORD JESUS CHRIST *in ſincerity and truth.* This is the love that Paul poſſeſſed; he loved all that loved our LORD JESUS CHRIST in *ſincerity* and *truth*; and if they *love* CHRIST *ſincerely*, the *root of the matter* is *in* them; and if they love him in *truth*, then they will not differ from us in doctrine. That ſoul that loves CHRIST in truth, will not

ſtand

ſtand in need of thy mantle to cover his errors, for love is the root of all real evangelical obedience, while, on the other hand, enmity is the root of all rebellion; and although a young believer cannot ſee eye to eye with an old one, yet he will not fight againſt any truth that is brought from the word of GOD; love will produce the obedience of faith—*charity believeth all things.* The ſoul that oppoſes any plain truth does not love CHRIST in truth, nor does he love him in ſincerity, becauſe he is not obedient. The new creation is full as uniform as the old; GOD did not ſend man into the world to walk about without a head, nor does he create a ſoul anew without giving him an underſtanding:—*We know that the Son of* GOD *is come, and hath given us an underſtanding.* 1 John v. 20. GOD has not only promiſed the ſpirit of love, but he has promiſed the ſpirit of a ſound mind alſo. I have heard people talk of perſons being evangeliſts in heart, though legal in judgment; but CHRIST tells us that we are to know the heart by that which proceeds from it;—if ſo, an erroneous judgment proves a rotten heart.

My reaſon for anſwering thee ſo ſharply is, becauſe I have heard ſo much of late about an *open catholic ſpirit*, that it ſeems to be a cant word, that ſtands for any thing, or nothing. We have many in our days who ſeem to be very open in their ſermons, crying out, "Come all, "Jeſus ſtands with open arms to receive "you,

" you,—roll yourſelves upon him:—my ſoul " for yours if he caſts you out." And yet theſe men, that preach this univerſal goſpel, are ſo incenſed at the cordial reception of a returning prodigal, that they would rob him of his kid, and ſtop his mouth from declaring what GOD has done for his ſoul. I am a living witneſs of this truth, and ſo are thouſands more. Their reſentment has run ſo high, that the intreaties of the Father of all Mercies is not ſufficient to bring them into an acquieſcence with his ſovereign diſplay of diſcriminating grace. It appears as if they would have been better pleaſed if he had periſhed in his own deceivings, than they are at the Father's receiving him ſafe and ſound.

Now Moſes was of a different ſpirit from theſe; for although his doctrine was nothing like theirs in latitude, yet his heart was as wide as their ſermons. When a young man ran and told Moſes, ſaying, *Eldad and Medad do prophecy in the camps, and Joſhua ſaid, my lord Moſes, forbid them*; his open reply is, *Envieſt thou for my ſake? I would to* GOD *that all the* LORD'S *people were prophets, and that he would put his Spirit upon them.* Numb. xi. 27, 28, 29. If this be an open ſpirit in reality, how little of it have they got who will load a ſound teſtimony with ſcandal, and uſe their utmoſt endeavour to hinder the uſefulneſs of thoſe that GOD is pleaſed to ſend into the Church.

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The Bible will hardly furniſh us with a miniſter (who pretends to preach CHRIST) of ſuch a ſpirit as this, except it be Diotrephes; and GOD ſays nothing in his favour. *I wrote unto the Church* (ſaid John), *but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, received us not; wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating againſt us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himſelf receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and caſteth them out of the Church.* 3 John ix. 10. This man is one of a catholic ſpirit; he kept John himſelf out of the pulpit,—he forbad his epiſtles being read to the congregation,—he would admit no labourer that John ſent into his pulpit, and thoſe that would have let them preach in their houſes, he forbad alſo; and if they diſputed his uſurped authority, he excommunicated them; or, as the text ſaith, *he caſt them out of the Church.* This man was a Lord over GOD's heritage, and this wretched ſpirit is cheriſhed too much in our days.

For my part I wiſh never to hear the word *catholic* again. It is a word that, I believe, was coined in Egypt at the time of the diſpute between that dreadful monſter *Arius*, the grandfather of our preſent Arians, and *Athanaſius*, whom GOD raiſed up to oppoſe him. The cauſe of Satan againſt CHRIST, carried on by Arius, was called the *Arian cauſe*, or the *Arian faith*; while, on the other hand, the cauſe of truth,

pleaded by Athanaſius, by way of diſtinction, was called the *Catholic cauſe*, or *Catholic faith*; ſo that thoſe ſouls that enjoyed the Father's love, the Saviour's atonement, and the Holy Ghoſt's teſtimony in their ſouls, were ſtyled people of the catholic faith; while thoſe that ridiculed and abuſed the LORD JESUS CHRIST, declaring him a mere creature, were called *Arians*, being the recipients of his *damnable hereſy*, as the Holy Ghoſt ſtyles it, 2 Pet. ii. 1.

While the true faith flouriſhed at Rome, thoſe believers that were of that city were ſtyled *Roman Catholics*; but as they have now exalted a Pope, in oppoſition to CHRIST, and have caſt out his word, and introduced their own ſuperſtitious vanities inſtead of it, and yet appropriate the name *Catholic* to themſelves, it is now big with nothing but miſchief; for he is deemed the beſt Catholic that oppoſes truth, kills the ſaints, and burns the bible; therefore it is high time to drop the word, and bring in thoſe that are better underſtood, and that are of a more antient date; ſuch as *ſaints*, *believers*, *children of* GOD, *diſciples of* CHRIST, *partaker of the Spirit*, *the houſehold of faith*, &c. are terms that have a better meaning than *a catholic man*, *catholic ſpirit*, and *catholic church*. Let us be no longer plunderers of the whore of Babylon;—let her names go with her relics, merit, and all the reſt of her trumpery, and let us ſay, Good rid of bad rubbiſh.

AHIMAAZ.

AHIMAAZ. I find you are no friend to the Roman Catholics, and yet you are beholden to them; for your Common Prayer Books were entirely of their compoſing, only our reformers purged out ſome few Popiſh dregs — ſuch as praying to ſaints and angels, &c. &c. And you know we have many good and able miniſters of JESUS CHRIST, who exalt its excellency publicly above all extempore prayer; and others, who were not in the eſtabliſhment when they took on them the miniſtry, are taking the *form* with them, even at the riſk of the Biſhop's diſpleaſure; yea, and ſome have ſpent hundreds, if not thouſands of pounds at law, in order to ſecure the uſe of it.—What do you think of this?

CUSHI. Suppoſe I was to go to-morrow into a town where the goſpel had never been preached, and where there was not a ſoul to be found that was converted to CHRIST, and I ſhould preach from this text, *Now if any man have not the Spirit of* CHRIST *he is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9; and I was to declare, firſt, the inſufficiency of a form of godlineſs without the power; ſecondly, the neceſſity of regeneration; thirdly, ſhew the operations of the Spirit from the word of GOD; fourthly, that GOD ſeeketh ſpiritual worſhippers; and laſtly prove, that the Holy Ghoſt is ſufficient to work faith, to ſanctify the ſoul, and prepare it for the reception of CHRIST; and ſufficient alſo to lead the believer on in a courſe of ſpiri-

tual devotion, as the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplication; and four ſouls, under this diſcourſe, ſhould be convinced of the inſufficiency of their formality; ſhould you not think that I had acted the faithful part in handling the above text in that manner? and that GOD had approved of it by four perſons being convinced under it?

AHIMAAZ. I ſhould think that you had taken the beſt ſtep that could be taken to undermine their ſandy foundation, and to ſhew them the neceſſity of being made new creatures in CHRIST; and I am fully perſuaded that GOD's word would bear you out.

CUSHI. Then ſuppoſe there ſhould come a goſpel miniſter the week following into the church, and he ſhould preach up the excellency of the form, caſt a few reflections on diſſenters, and ſpeak lightly of extempore prayer, and ſettle theſe four convinced ſouls on their old bottom again, would he not *build up that which I had deſtroyed?* Gal. ii. 18; and if ſo, who would be the tranſgreſſor?

AHIMAAZ. Certainly he would.

CUSHI. Then you have decided this matter. And I believe there are many in our days, who are deſtitute of grace, bitterly prejudiced againſt many miniſters that GOD has ſent, who preach and pray as the Spirit gives them utterance, who hear the goſpel, but place all their hopes in the form. And when theſe unleavened formaliſts hear a goſpel miniſter cry up the excellency of the

the form, and ridicule ſpiritual petitions, their ſelf-righteous ſouls are fed with the venom of aſps; their native prejudice againſt pious diſſenters is fixed the firmer, and they are wickedly and deceitfully eſtabliſhed on the old baſis of depraved nature;—this is no part of the work of an evangeliſt.

Ahimaaz. Do you think, my brother, that ever the Lord Jesus ſet their own ſouls at liberty in anſwer to the form of prayer? One would think that he had, as they ſpeak ſo highly of it, and ſo lightly of extempore prayer.

Cushi. No; God permits none to prevail with him, but thoſe who by the Spirit's interceſſion pour out their ſouls before him in faith, under a ſenſe of want and in a language expreſſive of their own troubles. And I will be bold to ſay, that if my brother could be in the ſtudy of theſe good men on ſome Saturday evening, or Sunday morning, when their Bible is as a ſealed book, Satan buffeting them, their mind confuſed, their judgments bewildered, a congregation gathering together, and no text opened to them, no thoughts ſpringing up, altogether unfurniſhed for the pulpit,—he would then ſee them upon their knees before God at hard work, without any ſervice book in their hands; he would hear their groaning petitions, — ſee their tears,—and be convinced that the whole buſineſs was carried on between God and their

own ſouls by thoſe very extempore prayers which they publicly ſpeak ſo lightly of.

AHIMAAZ. If this be the caſe, we muſt act with good men's bigotry as the Saviour bids us do with bad men's precepts; he tells us *not to do as the Phariſees do, but to do as they ſay*; but here we muſt not do (in this matter) as theſe good men *ſay*, but as they *do*.

CUSHI. If you do ſo, you will do right;—for if the ſupplications of the Holy Spirit will not prevail with GOD, no human compoſitions can.

AHIMAAZ. I believe there was at one time near two thouſand miniſters of the goſpel in this country that expoſed themſelves to many hardſhips for their non-conformity to the Common Prayer; which at times has led me to think very lightly of their ſufferings; ſince I have heard many good men who preach the ſame doctrine that they did, and yet contend for, and highly extol, the very things that their conſciences could never conform to. I have thought that their non-conformity was the effect of a ſtubborn and rebellious ſpirit, and their ſufferings were only in defence of a blind and miſled conſcience. This muſt be the caſe of thoſe non-conformiſts, or our preſent advocates for the form muſt be in the wrong, one of it; and I confeſs your preſent converſation about it has brought it as a puzzling matter of debate afreſh to my mind; and for my part I am not able to decide it.

CUSHI.

CUSHI. It is true, there were great numbers that ſuffered hunger, cold, and nakedneſs; moreover bonds and impriſonments; yea, and even death itſelf, rather than conform to the rules of the Common Prayer Book. And if they did it in defence of a blind or miſled conſcience, we may ſay of their ſufferings as David ſaid of the death of Saul's general—*died Abner as a fool dieth.* 2 Sam. iii. 33. Yet I think 'tis eaſy to decide the matter between the antient nonconformiſts and our preſent advocates; the nonconformiſts had the whole word of GOD on their ſide, but the others have not.

It is a bleſſed thing that men have no dominion over our faith, and that our faith is to ſtand in GOD's power, not in man's wiſdom; but he that attempts to eſtabliſh my faith on a human form, endeavours to ſettle it *in the wiſdom of men*, inſtead of *the power of* GOD. Faith is the gift of GOD the Father,—a grace from GOD the Saviour's fulneſs,—and is wrought in man by the operation of GOD the Holy Ghoſt; and in the promiſed aid of GOD, and in the powerful operations of Father, Son, and Spirit, it muſt ſtand, and no where elſe.

I know there are many venerable and valuable characters, whom GOD has called to the miniſtry ſince their firſt ignorant attempt to qualify themſelves for it at a univerſity; and in that ſphere they will ſhine, while they abide with GOD, wherein they were called; but as the current of ſcripture

does not flow in that channel, and as their ſouls were not delivered in anſwer to that form, and as they make uſe of extempore prayer in their families, and between GOD and their own ſouls, I think they might forbear their public reflections on thoſe prayers which have done ſo much for them.

AHIMAAZ. Pray, my dear brother, what may I call thy name?

CUSHI. My name is CUSHI.

AHIMAAZ. Of what country, pray.

CUSHI. I am an Iſraelite; and bleſſed be GOD through rich grace I hope I am an Iſraelite indeed.

AHIMAAZ. That I firmly believe; for fleſh and blood could never reveal the things unto thee that I have heard from thee; ſurely *the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel*; and the light and ſavour that my ſoul has felt under thy converſation is an additional proof of it—for the excellency and the power of religion is all of GOD. I wiſh my brother would relate a little of the dealings of GOD with him; I ſhould be all attention—my heart is ſweetly becalmed—my ſeat is pure eaſy; I don't believe that I ſhould be tired if I was to ſit here all night; nor do I believe that I ſhould feel the want of food;—my very body has loſt its appetite ſince my ſoul has been at this banquet.

CUSHI. I can hardly help laughing at thee, my brother, for thou ſayeſt I could ſit all night, when

when we have done that already; it was twelve o'clock yeſterday when we met under this tree, and now it wants half an hour of the ſame—we have ſat juſt twenty-three hours and a half;—ſurely, if ſome people were to hear thee, they would ſay as the giddy multitude did of Peter and John, *that they were full of new wine.* As for thy body having loſt its appetite is no wonder; the body and ſoul are cloſely united, and both intereſted in the covenant of grace. If the ſoul is burdened, the countenance of the body will proclaim it; the knees will tremble under its burden, and the whole animal frame will feel the effects of it. But, on the other hand, if the ſoul be enrapt in the viſion of faith, as Paul was, it is ſo forgotten that the ſoul cannot relate whether the body was in the company or not; and when the ſoul is indulged with the ſmiles of GOD, the body will forget both its wants and its infirmities, as Elijah did when his body faſted forty days, after the angels had entertained him under the juniper tree; or like Abraham, who at almoſt an hundred years old ran to the tent and ordered an entertainment for the beſt gueſt that ever viſited the world.

David certainly had ſome meaning when he ſaid *my heart and my fleſh crieth out for the living* GOD, Pſalm lxxxiv. 2; and, on the other hand, the terrors of GOD on his ſoul made *the beauty of his body to conſume away like a moth.* Pſalm xxxix. 11. But I ſhall proceed to give my dear brother ſome

account of the dealings of GOD with me, and I ſhall do it with pleaſure; for I never find my ſpirit more in its element than when, like David, I am telling others that fear GOD *what* HE *hath done for my ſoul*, Pſalm lxvi. 16. And indeed I think this is doing the work of an evangeliſt, much more than relating what we have done for GOD.

In my younger days I was one of a melancholy turn of mind, and was kept in perpetual bondage through the fear of death; and at certain ſeaſons I was rather devotional, after the manner of the Jews, but very ignorant of the nature and being of JEHOVAH. Nor did I ever rightly conſider his omnipreſence, his univerſal providence, his care for, nor his government of the world, until the great ſtir was made in Iſrael about David, the ſon of Jeſſe, killing the *Goliah of Gath*. The report of that wonderful act forcibly ſtruck me; the thoughts of his formidable and panoply'd antagoniſt, and the unarmed ſtripling (I mean David) going againſt him with no other armour than faith in GOD, whom he ſo often ſtyles the *ſhield of his help*; ſurely, he was clad with zeal for the LORD GOD of Iſrael, as with a cloak. His bold declaration to his formidable adverſary, and the wonderful event that juſtified his confident prediction, wrought wonderfully upon me, and effectually brought me to believe, *verily that there is a* GOD *that judgeth in the earth*.

From

From that time I was led to watch narrowly the hand of GOD with that eminent man; and in my heart ſaid, as Ruth did to Naomi, *Thy people ſhall be my people, and thy God my God.* I ſaw him in ſo bleſſed a ſtate, and ſo viſibly defended and upheld by the ALMIGHTY, that at times I was provoked to jealouſy, and ſecretly envied him his happineſs, yet would have given all the world for a part or lot in David's GOD, whom he ſo often ſtyles *the portion of his ſoul.*

AHIMAAZ. You bring many things to my mind;—but to break in upon your warm converſation would extinguiſh the glowing fervour of your ſpirit; go on, my brother, I am all attention.

CUSHI. I ſoon heard of Saul's hatred to David, of his cruel jealouſy, and of his attempting to kill him; and ſome, who were very much attached to Saul, repreſented David in a bad light, and took the part of Saul as one appointed, anointed, and ſet up by GOD himſelf to be King over Iſrael. Theſe things at times ſtaggered me; and David's *killing the Philiſtines, and ſcalping three hundred of them,* in order to obtain Saul's daughter for his wife, was very puzzling to me. But I ſtill obſerved that the protecting and delivering hand of GOD was evidently with him.

Jonathan, who I believe was a good man, his tender regard for David, his eſpouſing his cauſe, and expoſing himſelf to all the rage and malice

of

of his father, and *loving him as his own ſoul*, often brought me to believe that there was a divine union between them; and indeed before ever I obtained boldneſs to ſpeak to the ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael, I felt ſomething of the ſame bleſſed unction on my own ſoul. One thing greatly confounded me, and that was David's going down to the *cave of Adulam*, and appearing at the head of ſuch a ſet of vagrants;—*for all that were in diſtreſs, and all that were in debt, and all that were diſcontented, they gathered themſelves unto him, and he became a captain over them.* 1 Sam. xxii. 2. This I could not eaſily get over, that ſuch a ſet of men ſhould join themſelves to him; and that a favourite of heaven ſhould put himſelf as commander in chief at the head of ſuch a *ragged regiment*.

But when Saul's awful apoſtacy from God was made known, of his ſeeking to the *witch of Endor* for relief and counſel, of the hand of God that went out againſt him, of the miſerable end that he made, together with the wonderful deliverances that God wrought for David, of Samuel's attachment to him, of the beſt of ſaints loving him, and of the almighty power of God that levelled all his enemies, and exalted him on the throne of Iſrael, in ſpite of all oppoſition, I was ſo confirmed in the faithfulneſs and truth of David's God, that an inviſible power led me to one greater than David; and a ſudden thought ſtruck me that David was an eminent type of the much deſired and long looked for Meſſiah,

who

who is the only ſovereign of Iſrael, David's ſon, and David's LORD.

This divine dictator led my mind forth to traverſe David's life and conduct, as repreſenting the life of one greater; and from that time I traced all up to David's antetype, and there my miſconſtructions were rectified, and all my doubts reſolved.

I conſidered firſt his deſcent from a low family, his mean calling as a ſhepherd, his *ruddy countenance*, 1 Sam. xvi. 12. his being *but a ſtripling*, xvii. 56. and his ſlender legs, *Pſ.* cxlvii. 10. all typical of HIM that was ſo long foretold, who was to be *fairer than the children of men*, Pſ. xlv. 2. and called the *woman's ſeed*. David's effeminate appearance, and maſculine exploits, led me to contemplate perpetually on the mighty deeds that were to be performed in future, by one whoſe appearance would be altogether as unheroic as that of David's. David's killing the Philiſtines to obtain a wife, led me to conſider what the promiſed Meſſiah had done when *he gave Egypt for our ranſom*; and what he would do in future in behalf of this ſpouſe, when *the wicked ſhall be a ranſom for the righteous, and the tranſgreſſors for the upright*. Prov. xxi. 18.

AHIMAAZ. But you know that Saul's daughter was not a gracious woman; ſhe was taken away from David, and given to another, and how could ſhe be a type of the ſpouſe of CHRIST?—beſides,

beſides, it is ſaid that *ſhe deſpiſed him*, and was ſmitten with barrenneſs for it.

CUSHI. All this is true; yet Michal *was bone of David's bone, and fleſh of his fleſh, by marriage*; but ſhe never knew David's LORD, nor was ſhe a partaker of David's *ſure mercies*; yet ſhe was, in my opinion, a type.

By virtue of the union between the Godhead and manhood of CHRIST, which took place at his incarnation, the *bond-woman* (I mean the whole body of profeſſors who are under the law) may ſay, that CHRIST is fleſh of their fleſh, and bone of their bone, for he was born of a woman, and born under the law. And indeed on this account the bond-woman is called a *divorced wife*, Jer. iii. 8. and judged of GOD as one that has *broken wedlock*, Ezek. xvi. 38. and therefore put away, according to their legal covenant that allows a divorce, which Iſrael never rightly conſidered; and therefore, being eſpouſed only by the covenant of works, their marriage covenant was conditional, they broke wedlock, were divorced and put away; and as the bond-woman was not included in the covenant of grace, the legal covenant, for want of their obedience, afforded them no more claim on the LORD as an huſband. But the elect are not betrothed to the Saviour by the law of works, but they are betrothed to him *in loving kindneſs, in mercies, and that for ever*, Hoſea ii. 19. Thus the real church is not only bone of his bone, by virtue of his incarnation,

incarnation, but is made of one ſpirit with him by regeneration; *for two* (ſaith GOD) *ſhall be one fleſh, but he that is joined to the* LORD *is one ſpirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Thus Saul's daughter was a type of a falſe church, though not of a true one; and her being joined to another man ſhews the apoſtacy of falſe profeſſors; and as ſhe was taken from David, ſo GOD takes away every fruitleſs profeſſor—*every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away*, and if they continue until to the laſt day in their profeſſions it matters not. The fooliſh virgins were ſhut out of the marriage chamber—none will enter with the bridegroom into the wedding but thoſe that have oil in their veſſel, or the Spirit of CHRIST in their hearts, *Matt.* ii. 5.

I conſidered the poor diſtreſſed troop that went to the cave of Adulum, as prefiguring the poor ſenſible diſtreſſed ſinner, who becomes the followers of JESUS CHRIST. Thoſe that are *diſcontented* with the world and ſin, are glad to find contentment in a Saviour; and thoſe that are in *diſtreſs* on account of fear and bondage, are glad to find relief in their GOD; and all that are ſenſible of their *debts* are thankful for a *ſurety*. And to be plain, I found myſelf in a ſpiritual ſenſe one of this number, and was by an inviſible power led to follow David's antetype as ſuch.

AHIMAAZ. I beg pardon, my brother, for breaking into your diſcourſe, but I find my heart warmed, and my mind much enlightened by what you ſay, therefore I hope you will excuſe me.—

Pray

Pray what do you think of David's covenant with Abigail when ſhe met him; and of his marriage with her? She ſeemed to be one after his own heart, both as a *ſenſible woman* and as a ſaint of GOD. She propheſied to David, and ſpiritualized her huſband's name, and applies it to his nature.—*Let not my* LORD, *I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal; for as his name is, ſo is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him,* 1 Sam. xxv. 25. Do offer me your thoughts upon that circumſtance; for I evidently ſee that there is a ſpiritual vein of choice goſpel that runs through the whole body of divine revelation.

CUSHI. There certainly is; but in running of parallels between the types and the antetypes, the types always come ſhort, and are but faint repreſentations of what is repreſented by them. What was Eſau's *birth-right* when compared to that which it ſignified; and what is David when compared to the fruit of his body, and his LORD who was to ſet upon his throne?

AHIMAAZ. True, my brother; yet we may entertain ourſelves, and open our own thoughts to each other on the word of GOD, without offending the Almighty Saviour, for he bids us *ſearch the ſcriptures*; and ſays, *they teſtify of him.* I believe the Bible to be like its author; GOD is a Spirit, and his word is ſpiritual; for *'tis given by inſpiration of* GOD; and to handle it ſpiritually proves a ſpiritual diſcernment, and makes it a ſpiritual entertainment for the ſouls of believers, whom

whom Paul calls ſpiritual:—*But he that is ſpiritual judgeth all things, yet he himſelf is judged of no man*, 1 Cor. ii. 15. Hoſea ix. 7.

Cushi. To legalize the word of God to a heaven-born ſoul, is the way to obſcure his evidences, and bring him into bondage whom the Lord hath *made free*, John viii. 36. The man that does this *is a miniſter of the letter—not of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. Such a preacher is diſobedient to the divine command; God ſays, *Do the work of an evangeliſt*, 2 Tim. iv. 5, and the believer who is deprived of his freedom by him is diſobedient alſo; for the Spirit ſays, *Stand faſt in the liberty wherewith* Christ *has made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage.* Gal. v. 1.

I conſidered Abigail's coming to David as prefiguring every elected ſoul that God brings to his dear Son; *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him*, John vi. 44. Christ, in the character of a *bridegroom*, receives ſuch into ſpiritual union with himſelf, and holds them faſt in the bond of everlaſting love for ever; *I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you*, John xiv. 20. Thus the Lord receives the ſouls that his father draws to him as his own beloved bride—*He that hath the bride is bridegroom*, John iii. 29. Abigail came to David with ſpiritual language and prophecy in her mouth, and expreſſed a ſpiritual union with him, a love to him, and predicts his ſafety on earth,

and

and his eternal exiſtence in the favour of GOD; and I believe ſhe foreſaw that herſelf was to be his wife.

Obſerve, firſt ſhe comes to David, as all ſinners do to CHRIST, with a prayer in her mouth, *I pray thee forgive the treſpaſs of thine handmaid.* Secondly ſhe comes with a full perſuaſion of the eſtabliſhment and ſafety of David's houſe,—*For the* LORD *will certainly make my Lord a ſure houſe.* So comes the ſinner by faith to CHRIST; being perſuaded there is ſecurity in *his houſe*, and no where elſe; and the Saviour is called David, Ezek. xxxvii. 25, and his church is called the *houſe of David* to this day, *Zech.* xii. 10. Thirdly, ſhe aſſigns a reaſon for this, *becauſe my Lord fighteth the battles of the* LORD, even as CHRIST overcame the world: *Yet a man is riſen up to purſue thee, and to ſeek thy ſoul,*—as Judas and the Phariſees did the Saviour's. *But the ſoul of my Lord ſhall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God*—as repreſenting the union between the Saviour's human nature and his Godhead. *And the ſouls of thine enemies them ſhall he ſling out, as out of the middle of a ſling*;—as the Saviour will one day caſt away the enemies of his croſs.

Thus ſhe came to David with ſpiritual language; and *every one that hath learned of the Father cometh unto me* (ſays CHRIST). *Rabbi, thou art the ſon of* GOD, *thou art the King of Iſrael* (ſaith Nathaniel);—*Thou art* CHRIST *the Son of* GOD (ſays Peter): *Fleſh and blood hath not re-*

vealed this unto thee (ſays the Saviour), *but my Father which is in heaven.* Abigail now concludes with a perſuaſion of the King's exaltation, and a petition in her own favour: *And it ſhall come to paſs, when the* LORD *ſhall have done to my Lord according to all the good that he hath ſpoken concerning thee, and ſhall have appointed thee ruler over Iſrael*; as CHRIST was to be afterwards *upon the throne of David, to order it and eſtabliſh it with juſtice and judgment for ever*, Iſaiah ix. 7; *but when the* LORD *ſhall have dealt well with my Lord, then remember thine handmaid:* As the poor thief upon the croſs ſaid unto the Saviour, *Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom.* The anſwer that Abigail got contains a bleſſing on the LORD for his goodneſs, a bleſſing on Abigail whom the LORD had ſent, and a cordial acceptance of her perſon: *And David ſaid to Abigail, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, which ſent thee this day to me; and bleſſed be thou, which has kept me this day from coming to ſhed blood, and from avenging myſelf with my own hand. So David received of her hand that which ſhe had brought him, and ſaid unto her, Go up in peace to thine houſe; ſee, I have hearkened to thy voice, and accepted thy perſon*, 1 Sam. xxv. 35. Theſe bleſſings may typify the bleſſings the LORD gave on the mount. David's not avenging himſelf, ſhews how the Saviour left his father to take away Judas, and *every other branch in him that beareth not fruit*; and thirdly, it ſhews the prevalent interceſſion which believing ſouls

make for the wicked;—as Abraham's interceſſion for Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom, was a ſtaying of the LORD's hand, for a time, from the four cities of the plain; and as Abigail's interceſſion kept the ſword of David *from Nabal and all his houſe.*

AHIMAAZ. It is ſaid of Abigail, that ſhe was *a woman of good underſtanding, and of a beautiful countenance, but the man was churliſh and evil in his doings*, 1 Sam. xxv. 3. I wonder that a gracious woman ſhould ſubmit to be ſo *unequally yoked together with an unbeliever*; and eſpecially with ſuch an evil churl as he was.

CUSHI. We are all as cloſely *wedded to the law*, as a covenant of works, as ſhe was to Nabal; and the law is as churliſh as ever Nabal was; for it not only threatens us with the anger of GOD, but with hell alſo; hence it is ſaid to be an *adverſary*, Luke xii. 58. and *againſt us*, Col. ii. 14. And as Abigail was barren to Nabal, ſo is the ſinner to GOD under the law; but when Nabal was dead, then ſhe married David. So when we ſee the law to be a *killing letter*, and that it cannot give life or fruitfulneſs, *Gal.* iii. 21. then we may go and be eſpouſed to the ſpiritual David, who is to be *a prince for ever*, Ezek. xxxvii. 25. as Abigail was to typical David. Paul is very plain upon this: *Know ye not, brethren (for I ſpeak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an huſband is bound*

bound by the law to her huſband ſo long as he liveth; but if the huſband be dead, ſhe is looſed from the law of her huſband; ſo then if while her huſband liveth ſhe be married to another man, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs; but if her huſband be dead ſhe is free from that law, ſo that ſhe is no adultereſs though ſhe be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of CHRIST, *that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto* GOD. Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

AHIMAAZ. David certainly was a moſt eminent type of the Meſſiah; and bleſſed be GOD I can ſee a deal of choice goſpel matter and experience where I never expected to find any; and I find that the humble approach of Abigail to David, her interceſſion for her houſehold, her humble petition for herſelf, her free-will offering to feed his followers, and her earneſt deſire of being remembered in future by him, tallies with my own experience; for I could have *put my mouth in the duſt, if ſo be there might be hope* for me in the dear Redeemer, Lam. iii. 29. And I wreſtled hard with the Lord for my friends alſo, as ſhe did for hers; and as for the followers of CHRIST, I took pleaſure in relieving them when I could; and, like unto her, I then begged, and ſtill beg to be remembered in future by the LORD; and I am ſure I have often obtained as ſweet an anſwer from David's LORD, as ſhe did from David; and ſome of the ſame words in it,

Go in peace, I have accepted thee, has often been a ſenſible anſwer to my prayers.

If David was ſo ſweet a type of the Meſſiah, then his ambaſſadors, that he ſent to *great Nabal in his name,* muſt be typical of the ambaſſadors of CHRIST; for they ſaid to Nabal, *Peace be unto all that thou haſt.* And this agrees with the Saviour's meſſage ſent by his ambaſſadors, *Into whatſoever houſe you enter, ſay peace be to this houſe; and if the Son of Peace be there, your peace ſhall come upon it, and there abide, eating and drinking ſuch things as are ſet before you,* Luke x. 5, 6, 7. What do you think of this? don't you think it is right? for they were to carry peace from David, and receive victuals from Nabal, but he gave them none.

CUSHI. I think you are very right; and they fared juſt as many of the Lord's Ambaſſadors do in our days; they neither receive their meſſage, nor afford them relief, but impiouſly rail on them as Nabal did, *aſking who is David? ſhall I give my victuals to men who I know not whence they be?* Thus he ſent the ambaſſadors away, both empty and aſhamed. But what was the conſequence? why you ſee that the meſſage of peace was received by a daughter of peace, namely Abigail: *and the ſword was drawn againſt every male in all the houſe,* 1 Sam. xxv. 13. 22. And though, by the interceſſion of the daughter of peace the ſword was ſheathed for a time, yet *the* LORD GOD *of recompences will ſurely requite,* Jer. li. 56. And that many

of

of our legal ſelf-righteous worldlings will find, one day or other, as Nabal and Iſrael of old did, when there will be no ſon or daughter of peace left to *ſtand in the gap*. Abigail's interceſſion prolonged Nabal's life but a few days; and Iſrael of old, at one time, found no interceſſor, and conſequently no reſpite: *And the Lord God of their fathers ſent to them by his meſſengers riſing up betimes and ſending, becauſe he had compaſſion on his people and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the meſſengers of* GOD, *and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his prophets, until the wrath of the* LORD *aroſe againſt his people, till there was no remedy*, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. Even ſo the Saviour will one day puniſh the covetous worldlings as GOD puniſhed Nabal. *I was an hungred and you gave me no meat*; this was the crime of Nabal, who refuſed to relieve the LORD's anointed; and as David's wrath was kindled for the contempt of his meſſage, and the indignity done to his ſervants; ſo will the LORD ſay, *As ye did it not unto theſe my brethren ye did it not unto me, and theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment*, Mat. xxv. 46.

AHIMAAZ. I ſee that every part of GOD's word is pregnant with divine inſtruction, and affords the child of GOD ſweet entertainment; but David's meſſengers met with better treatment, when they went to eſpouſe Abigail to David: ſhe treated them with the greateſt civility; they did not go home aſhamed as before.

CUSHI. And ſo will all the LORD's ſervants be treated by the elect, who, as Paul ſays, they

are ſent *to eſpouſe to the one huſband, that they may preſent them as chaſte virgins to* CHRIST, 2 Cor. ii. 2.

Thus I have ſhewed thee, my brother, by what way I was led at firſt, namely, by obſerving the good hand of the LORD upon another; even David, as many others have done ſince. From theſe obſervations I was brought to an acquaintance with David, and to enjoy an union with him: and in time I became one of his meſſengers after he was eſtabliſhed on the throne of Iſrael, and continued with him all the time that Abſalom's conſpiracy was carried on againſt him, and even to his death.

I was with the army of David, when the rebels were defeated *in the wood of Ephraim*, 2 Sam. xviii. 6. And I was ſent by Joab, the King's commander, to bear tidings to the citizens of Mahanaim of the *death of the conſpirator*, and of the *defeat of the rebels*, 2 Samuel xviii. 21. But alas! it happened to me, as it has done to many more; I began to be lifted up in my office; I thought it ſo great a thing to be a meſſenger of the LORD's anointed; and indeed ſo it was, for GOD evidently bleſſed and proſpered every faithful friend that David had: but, to my ſhame, I forgot myſelf, and my bountiful benefactor alſo, who had brought me not only to be a loyal ſubject of David, but a ſubject of a ſpiritual and an everlaſting kingdom; nor did I daily acknowledge, as I ought to have done (and as I uſed to do), the good hand of GOD with me, which

which had fixed my ſtation ſo nigh the King's perſon. My firſt backſliding ſtep was ingratitude; and the next ſin which always attends it is remiſſneſs in duty, and this leads to carnal ſecurity, and theſe procured my wretched fall, which ſoon followed; for, as Solomon ſays, *a haughty ſpirit goes before a fall.*

AHIMAAZ. The dealings of GOD, both in providence and grace, have been wonderful with you indeed; and one would think that a ſoul ſo deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of divine goodneſs, and daily compaſſed about with ſuch viſible diſplays of the tender care and rich mercy of GOD, could never become ſo inſenſible and ungrateful; but, alas, I know by ſad experience, *that the heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* Jer. xvii. 9.

But pray what was your fall, my brother, for I long to compare notes with you, for I have been down myſelf, as ſhall be related before we part, if GOD permit and you approve, for I am neither tired nor hungry, nor do I believe I ſhall if I ſit here all the week.

CUSHI. Why, as I grew proud and ſelf-ſufficient, I grew independent of GOD, and neglected prayer; this gradually brought deadneſs and barrenneſs on my ſoul, and conſequently I became dry and unſavory in my converſation; ſome of the King's devotional friends began to ſlight me on this account, and when I perceived this I began to ſhun the moſt ſpiritual part of

the royal houſehold, and to cleave to them who were but half-hearted to David; and this led me to aſſociate with ſome who ſecretly favoured the *houſe of Saul.* This alienation of affection from David alienated my affections from David's GOD alſo; the man that hates the ſaints of GOD in his heart can find no communion with GOD himſelf; *he that hateth his brother abideth in darkneſs,* and if he does he cannot find his way to GOD. From this time I felt an hatred riſe in my heart againſt the LORD's anointed, and againſt his moſt loyal friends; and when I have heard the King exult and triumph in the diſcriminating favour of GOD towards him, I was inwardly galled at it, and eſpecially on recollecting that ſpeech which he made to his wife Michal, *It was before the* LORD, *which choſe me before thy father, and before all his houſe, to appoint me ruler over the people of the* LORD, *over Iſrael; therefore I will play before the* LORD, 2 Sam. vi. 21. I ſhall not relate the wretched conſtruction that my wicked mind put upon the words, but I found an enmity riſe in my heart againſt him; nor could I rejoice in his rapturous ſpeeches, and heavenly acclamations, as I formerly had done. I found the words of pious Job to be true—*Envy ſlays the ſilly one,* Job v. 2. But the circumſtance that wound my jealouſy and envy up to the height was, David's *giving up the five ſons of Saul to the Gibeonites, to be hanged on the mountain of Gilboa,* 2 Sam. chap. 21.

Thus

Thus my love waxed cold to David, and I conſequently loſt my ſweet fellowſhip with his GOD; and all by a falſe ſpirit. I alſo juſtified in my heart the conduct of *Rizpah, the daughter of Ajah, when ſhe took ſackcloth and ſpread it for her upon the rock from the beginning of harveſt until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and ſuffered neither the birds of heaven to reſt on their bodies by day, nor the beaſts of the field by night*, 2 Sam. xxi. 10. All my rebellion was levelled at GOD himſelf, who had left Saul, but ſwore to David that he would never leave him. Woe be to that man that knowingly eſpouſes an intereſt that GOD has blaſted; this was my ſin, and I paid dear for it; I acted contrary to the viſible teſtimony of GOD, which juſtified the King: *For David's ſervants performed all that the King commanded, and the* LORD *was intreated for the land.* 2 Sam. xxi. 14.

Who could ever think that there could be ſuch deception as this in a veſſel of mercy? That an heart once in union with the ſaints, and enflamed with love to GOD, could ever be ſo damped in affection, both to GOD and his family, as to feel a ſenſible enmity againſt both, and be prejudiced in favour of apoſtates? But, as my royal maſter ſays, *What is man?*

AHIMAAZ. And pray how did the LORD deliver thee, my brother?

CUSHI. The death of David ſhocked my very ſoul, and awfully alarmed my conſcience; and the report of his laſt dying words, *Although my houſe*

houſe be not ſo with GOD, *yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure; for this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. extorted Balaam's confeſſion from my heart, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his*, Num. xxiii. 10. I ſoon felt the loſs of the ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael; and found, by woful experience, what a dreadful thing it is to cheriſh enmity againſt a favourite of heaven whom GOD is determined to bleſs. But in reading my royal maſter's writings, which GOD was pleaſed to bleſs, I felt my ſoul reviſited with the bleſſings of real repentance for my paſt folly, for which I muſt ever remain a debtor to the unchangeable love of GOD. I found my mind fit for nothing but ſilent ſolitude, and therefore I took David's book of Pſalms in my hand, and determined to tread in all the foot-ſteps (if poſſible) that he had gone; and when I came to any ſpot where he had been viſited by the LORD, and delivered from any particular trouble, my ſoul felt ſuch an unutterable love to him as cannot be expreſſed; indeed I never knew his worth till I felt my loſs. And verily GOD made me feel all that I read of his writings, juſt as if it was all my own experience; *ſurely this is going forth by the footſteps of the flock*, Song i. 8.

I went and wept over his ſepulchre by the hour, and felt an affection to his remains, as I believe the ſleeping duſt of Samuel and other

holy prophets had often affected David himſelf—*He had took pleaſure in the ſtones of* Zion, *and favoured the duſt thereof*, Pſalm cii. 14. From thence I came into the *valley of Beca*, and read what David ſaid of that; and I am ſure I enjoyed and felt every word of it, until I took his words as my own, and ſpoke to my long-ſuffering and propitious Redeemer in the language of his eminent type and faithful ſervant David; and through the ſuper-abounding and recovering grace of my covenant God, I am arrived at Hermon. Bleſſed be God, I have been now for ſome weeks under the ſweet teaching of that divine inſtructor that taught me the path of life at firſt, and God grant that I never may fall, nor ſtray from him again, neither in heart nor in life.

Ahimaaz. Wonderful are the works of God, and wonderful has his mercy been to thee, my brother; I think the union you have found with David's ſpirit in his writings, is what another means when he ſays, *We are come to mount Zion, to the heavenly Jeruſalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the ſpirits of juſt men mude perfect, &c.* Heb. xii. 22. The real believer, that has fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, by the Holy Ghoſt, is of one ſpirit with all the heavenly family; for we find a union of ſentiment with them,—we ſee as they ſaw,—and are in the ſame path of tribulation that they were in,—are under the influence of the ſame ſpirit,—and find a love

to

to them, a union with them, and a hope of joining them, and enjoying their company to all eternity.

CUSHI. It certainly is the apoſtle's meaning; for we are united to the ſame head of influence, that glorified ſouls enjoy above; there is but one bleſſed Spirit that unites the elect family both of heaven and earth to one head, only we *have but the firſt fruits of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 23. while they enjoy *the inheritance of the ſaints in light*, Acts xxvi. 18; for, as a good man ſays, grace is glory begun below, and glory is grace in perfection. But let me hear a little of the dealings of GOD with thee, my brother.

AHIMAAZ. Pray don't you know me?

CUSHI. No, not that I recollect.

AHIMAAZ. Don't you remember a perſon that preſſed upon Joab to carry tidings after the death of Abſalom, when the rebels were routed *in the woods of Ephraim?*

CUSHI. Yes, I do, his name was Ahimaaz, a freſh-coloured young man. He was one that brought the wretched council of Ahithophel to David.

AHIMAAZ. You are right; and I am the man. *Huſhai the Archite ſent me with tidings to the king*, 2 Sam. xvii. 14, and I was obliged to ſtay by *Enrogal, the king's gardens, for fear of being taken by Abſalom's ſpies; and at laſt I was hid in a well by a good woman who was a lover of David.* 2 Sam. xvii. 17, 18, 19.

CUSHI. Why you are much altered ſince that time.

AHIMAAZ. Yes; I have had a good deal to humble me ſince that, and bleſſed be GOD for it; for though I have been ſorely afflicted, yet it has been for the good of my ſoul; for I find where there are no inward nor outward trials there is no growth in grace; but when once an heart has been thoroughly humbled, a little croſs will bring it low.

CUSHI. I am glad at my heart to ſee thee, my brother; and eſpecially to find thee a lover of the great and bleſſed MESSIAH.

AHIMAAZ. Not more glad than I am to ſee thee, and eſpecially to find thee *a ſcribe ſo well inſtructed.*

CUSHI. But do tell me how thou cameſt acquainted with David at firſt, for I almoſt forget thee; for, to the beſt of my remembrance, thou didſt not abide long in the king's ſervice; nor do I remember the cauſe, nor the time of thy going out.

AHIMAAZ. My father's *name was Zadok, a prieſt and a Levite,* 2 Sam. xv. 24; and he received a charge from David *to carry the ark from following him back to the city,* ver. 15. My father being a prieſt, and a Levite, he was much in favour with the king; and indeed David ſometimes ſtiled him *a ſeer or prophet*; and therefore, as David's confidant, he ſent him back as a ſpy over the conſpirators, and I went with him, as you read: *the king ſaid*

ſaid alſo unto Zadok the prieſt, art not thou a ſeer? Return into the city in peace, and your two ſons with you, Abimaaz thy ſon, and Jonathan the ſon of Abiathar, 2 Sam. xv. 27.

My being the ſon of a *pious prieſt, as well as a ſeer*, I learnt to talk of religious matters fluently; and being kept cloſe to the worſhip of the Jews, as well as to family prayer, I was capable of ſpeaking in prayer, and had an outſide appearance of ſanctity; and indeed thought at times that I was a real ſaint and prophet of God, as well as my father: but, alas! I have found ſince, that grace is not hereditary; it is the gift of God, and from God we muſt receive it for ourſelves, if ever we are ſaved.

Cushi. All the principles of religion that children learn by rote from their parents, be they ever ſo ſound, they will give them all up when they are brought under deep convictions; and be juſt as ſelf-righteous and as ſelf-willed as the moſt ſtubborn Phariſee in the world: until God brings them out of bondage, and then he will apply thoſe wholeſome truths to their heart, which before had only a lodging in their head.

Ahimaaz. Indeed, my brother, that is a true aſſertion, I know it by experience; whatever doctrines are inſtilled into people's heads by men, will eaſily be drove out by men, unleſs God apply them by the Holy Ghoſt.

But, to proceed; I was ſent by my father, in company with Jonathan, to carry tidings to David

vid from Huſhai; and when we had delivered our meſſage to the king, I conſidered myſelf a man of conſequence; firſt, as *the ſon of a ſeer*—ſecondly, as a *meſſenger to the King*,—and, thirdly, *as a loyal ſubject* to David when ſo many rebelled againſt him. This was followed with the alarming tidings of *Ahithophel's having hanged himſelf*; I ſaw the LORD had anſwered David's prayer when he ſaid, *O Lord, turn the counſel of Ahithophel into fooliſhneſs*; and was much ſurpriſed at the terrible judgments by which GOD had anſwered it. I ſecretly thanked GOD in my heart that I was not like Ahithophel; and was not a little pleaſed with my loyalty; and truly I thought myſelf on the LORD's ſide, becauſe I was with the LORD's anointed. And indeed this awful judgment falling on ſo great a man, in anſwer to David's ſimple prayer, ſo fired my zeal, that I followed the King to Mahanaim, and went with the King's forces againſt the rebels; and was with Joab when Abſalom was ſlain, and thought myſelf a man as ſufficient to bear tidings as any in Paleſtine. I earneſtly preſſed upon Joab to let me go, but Joab would not ſend the tidings by me, though I uſed much importunity.

CUSHI. You are not the firſt man, my brother, that has been forward at this work, nor will you be the laſt; thoſe that have the feweſt tidings to bear are the moſt forward to run,—and they that have nothing to ſay are ſure to outrun them that have; but if ever GOD ſends them with

with tidings, they will have all their ground to run over again; for if they are true meſſengers, they muſt go all the way in regeneration which they went before in external profeſſion.

AHIMAAZ. True, my brother; and ſo I have found it; for after Joab had called and ſent you with the tidings, I was grieved at it, though he told me that *I ſhould bear tidings another day, but then I had no tidings ready*; however I importuned him again *to let me run after you*, but he refuſed; but I wearied him with my importunity *until he ſaid, Run*; ſo I ſet off *by the way of the plain, and ſo out-run you*, 2 Samuel xviii. 18 to 23.

CUSHI. Ah, that is often the caſe now-a-days; there are many that run before they are ſent; and if *one takes the path of tribulation*, and the *other the way of the plain*, no wonder if the latter, in the judgment of men, out-runs the former. But in the eyes of the LORD it is not ſo,—*there are laſt that ſhall be firſt, and firſt laſt, for many are called* by the goſpel, *but few choſen* of GOD, and fewer ſtill to bear tidings, *Matt.* xx. 16. *The race*, ſays the wiſe man, *is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong*, Eccl. ix. 11. Many a wiſe man has miſtook the road, and miſſed the mark, while *the fool has not erred in the path, Iſa.* xxxv. 8; and when the great ſpoil was divided, *the lame have took the prey*, Iſa. xxxiii. 23.

But pray what were the chief motives that ſo ſtrongly induced you to bear tidings? for the man

man who waits for tidings in the field of battle is in imminent danger, nor is he in leſs danger when he runs with tidings, for he is expoſed to the arrows of every ſcouting party.

AHIMAAZ. I have often obſerved that when the citizens of Zion have ſet a watchman upon their walls, to obſerve the approach of an enemy to their liberties, or an ambaſſador of peace; if the latter has appeared; as ſoon as the *watchman lifted up his voice, and gave the watch-word,* Iſa. lii. 8. the citizens would immediately climb upon the walls, and when they ſaw the meſſenger gain the ſummit of an hill, they would cry out, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publiſheth ſalvation; that ſaith unto Zion, Thy* GOD *reigneth,* Iſa. lii. 7.; and as ſoon as he drew nigh the walls, the porter would open the door with ſuch joy to ſee him, and cry out, *Come in, thou bleſſed of the* LORD, *why ſtandeſt thou without?* Gen. xxiv. 31. And as ſoon as he came in, all the inhabitants of the city would flock round him from every quarter, to hear what the tidings were; and while he has ſtood publiſhing them, ſome would ſmile, others weep, ſome triumph, and ſome could hardly keep audience for joy; and when he has ended his oration, ſome have wept over him, others thanked GOD for ſending him, others wiſhing to hear the ſame tidings over again; and, to be ſhort, all thoſe that prized their liberties have ſhowered

the bleſſings of heaven upon his head. Indeed ſome few, that knew not what a citizen's liberties were worth, have gone away railing at the meſſenger and his meſſage both; but the citizens, who were *free men*, have followed them up with ſuch ſharp rebukes, and have ſo juſtified *wiſdom's meſſenger and meſſage*, that they have ſkulked away *with a fallen countenance*, like thoſe who once *accuſed the adulterous woman before the Great* MESSIAH.

By theſe obſervations I clearly ſaw that there was a double honour belonging to the office; and I have ſecretly envied the meſſenger, and coveted the honour of his holy calling. Theſe were my motives; and I thought with myſelf thus:—My father is a prieſt,—I have good learning, and can ſpeak with a more audible voice than he, and have ſublime expreſſions at command to convey tidings,—and who more fit than I?

CUSHI. Ah, my brother, but there is a power that attends a real tidings-bearer which no audible voice can command; the power is of the MESSIAH, and not of us; and *thoſe that honour him he will honour*, 1 Sam. ii. 30.

AHIMAAZ. Bleſſed be GOD I know that now; but, as I before obſerved, theſe were my motives; and as I knew the citizens of Mahanaim would all be longing for tidings, I was determined to get their praiſe; therefore I ſtrove to outrun you, though I ſweat for it.

CUSHI. And when you came to the city, pray what did you ſay?

AHIMAAZ.

AHIMAAZ. Oh, I made a poor tale of it; *The king ſaid, Is the young man Abſalom ſafe? and I anſwered, When Joab ſent the king's ſervant, and me thy ſervant, I ſaw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was*, 2 Sam. xviii. 29.

CUSHI. And pray how did the citizens receive you, my friend; did they exult and triumph, and bleſs your feet for bringing good tidings?

AHIMAAZ. No, far from it; their ſeeing me run ſo faſt raiſed their expectation very high; and the watchman crying out, *The running of the foremoſt is like the running of Ahimaaz, the ſon of Zadok*, 2 Sam. xviii. 27. raiſed it ſtill higher, ſo that they expected good tidings, and an eloquent oration from the ſon of the ſeer. But, alas, all their expectations were cut off, and their very countenances were expreſſive of the effects of their ſtarving diſappointment; my *falſe gift, of which I had boaſted, was* (as wiſdom ſays) *a cloud and wind without rain*, Prov. xxv. 14.; and ſo the citizens found it, for they got neither refreſhment nor hope from my tidings.

CUSHI. But I ſuppoſe you thought that you ſhould cut a figure among them when you ſet off, did you not?

AHIMAAZ. O yes, that I did; for I thought the very word *tidings*, and a few *encomiums put upon the king*, would be enough to ſet all the citizens in an extaſy; for I had obſerved in the tidings of others, that many praiſes on the king were introduced, therefore I was determined not to leave theſe out.

CUSHI. And did you cry out *tidings*, and praiſe the king?

AHIMAAZ. You may be ſure that I tried to mimick others as well as I could; I made a great outcry, I bowed my knees, and I praiſed the king: *I called out and ſaid to the king, All is well; and I fell down to the earth on my face before the king, and ſaid, Bleſſed be the* LORD *thy* GOD, *which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand againſt my Lord the king*, 2 Sam. xviii. 28.; but when they began to enquire into particulars, I was obliged to tell them that *I ſaw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.* 2 Sam. xviii. 29.

CUSHI. And ſuppoſe any of the citizens had aſked you who ſent you, what ſhould you have ſaid to them?

AHIMAAZ. Had that been the caſe, I could not have anſwered them at all, for indeed I was not ſent; I only *got leave of Joab to run after you*, when indeed my intent was to run before you, and that only for the ſake of applauſe.

CUSHI. The man that bears tidings, ought to ſhew both *his miſſion and commiſſion*; and if the citizens are ſatisfied with theſe, they will ſhew him reſpect, and give him audience too, whether his tidings be diſagreeable or pleaſing. How wouldeſt thou have acted if they had ſcrutinized thy knowledge of heraldry and war, by aſking thee what *banners were diſplayed?* Iſa. xiii. and what *ſtandards were ſet up?* Iſa. xlix. 22. who *diſcovered their valour*, 2 Tim. iv. 7. and who their *cowardice*,

dice, Pſal. lxxviii. 9. what perſons deſerted, and who came over to the *king's ſtandard*, Iſa. lxii. 10. What *ſtandard-bearer fainted*, Iſa. x. 18. who ſtood it out, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. and who firſt *broke their ranks*, Joel ii. 7. who were taken priſoners, how many wounded, Acts ii. 37. and how many ſlain?

AHIMAAZ. All this I thought nothing about; I cried out, *all is well*, dropped upon my knees, and praiſed the king in GOD's name; and I thought that would do.

But I was much abaſhed to ſee how the citizens looked at me; I appeared as a mere impoſtor confounded before them, and ſome of them whiſpered together, ſaying, What could tempt him to run, ſweating at that rate, with the empty ſound of *all is well in his mouth*, when he knows nothing of the matter?

CUSHI. And pray what ſaid the king to thee?

AHIMAAZ. He frowned upon me, and put me to the bluſh before the loyaliſts, by telling me *to give this man place* (namely you): He ſternly ſaid unto me, *turn aſide, and ſtand here; and I turned aſide, and ſtood ſtill*, 2 Sam. xviii. 20.

CUSHI. Thou art not the firſt aſpiring character that has *been put lower in the preſence of the prince, whom thine eyes have ſeen*, Prov. xxv. 7.

AHIMAAZ. I aſſure you, my brother, that my pride was much hurt at it, my conſequence much demoliſhed, and I have been fully convinced ſince, that more than an audible voice is wanted in thoſe that bear tidings. And, indeed, from that time I found my falſe zeal abate, and my

love to the king wax cold; and no wonder, when I only followed him to gain a name, and get applauſe; and expected him to encourage me in my pride.

CUSHI. And did this affair put a final ſtop to your deſire of appearing in that character?

AHIMAAZ. No; I ran with the words, *all is well*, in my mouth after that.

But that which put a final ſtop to my running was, I had a fall upon a certain *mountain*, as you had on *Mount Gilboa*. Your barren ſoul lay there many days (you ſay), without either *dew or rain*; but mine had never felt either.

CUSHI. Pray where was you running, and what was the name of the mountain on which you fell? Did you *ſtumble upon one of the dark mountains?* Jer. xiii. 16.

AHIMAAZ. If I had, I ſhould not have known it; becauſe I had never been in *the light*. No; I was running from *Mahanaim to Jeruſalem*, to carry the tidings of *Abſalom's death, and the defeat of the rebels*. The king did not ſend me, nor was I ſent by any body elſe, but I ſtole away; for as I had met with a wretched diſappointment before at *Mahanaim*, I was determined to try my luck again at Jeruſalem; but juſt as I came *to the village called Belphage, at the mount of Olives*, Mark xi. 1. and was aſcending the next hill, *down I came neck and heels*.

CUSHI. What, did you fall on the *mount of Olives?*

AHIMAAZ.

AHIMAAZ. If I had, I ſhould have been able to have got up again. No; it was the next mount to that, called the *Mount of Corruption*: and rightly named it is; for there Solomon fell, and cloſe to it he raiſed up all his abominable temples for idolatry, as you read, *and the high places that were before Jeruſalem, which were on the right hand of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon* (the king of Iſrael) *had builded for Aſhtoreth, the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemoſh the abomination of the Moabites; and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did* [Joſiah] *defile*, 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

CUSHI. There never was above one man yet that found a way to Jeruſalem, ſo as entirely to eſcape that mountain, for it ſtands right before the city: and it is upon that mount that all the abominable Babels, vain towers, baſeleſs caſtles, and imaginary ſtructures in the world have been reared. I believe that is the mount that bears up the whole fabric of iniquity; it is a ſpot that is barren of all good; no good fruit ever grows there. This the great MESSIAH ſhewed to his followers, when he *curſed the fruitleſs fig-tree*; that tree was barren, and yet it grew almoſt a *quarter of a mile from that mount*.

AHIMAAZ. They never could get the MESSIAH to put his foot on that mount; he kept cloſe to the *Mount of Olives*, until he came to the foot of the *Mount of Corruption*; and then he ſent his ſervants to fetch the aſs; and he rode all the reſt of the way

upon the garments of his followers, as it is written, *and they brought the colt to* JESUS, *and caſt their garments on him; and he ſat upon him, and many ſpread their garments in the way*, Mark xi. 7, 8. Perhaps this was done to ſhow them, *that their filthy rags of ſelf-righteouſneſs*, Iſa. xlvi. 6. or their *filthy garments*, Zech. iii. 3. ought to be left at the foot of that mount, as more fit for the foot of an aſs, than the ornament of a Chriſtian.

CUSHI. That is right, and you have hit the mark; the Saviour did nothing in vain. It was not without a cauſe that he ſtopped at that mount, nor did he curſe the fruitleſs fig-tree, mount the aſs, or ride on the clothes of his followers for nothing: but I ſuppoſe you learnt ſomething by your fall; that is, you had ſome ſtrange ſenſations, and found yourſelf too much diſabled to run with tidings, did you not?

AHIMAAZ. Indeed I did; for I never knew what the fall of Adam meant, till I fell on that mount; nor did I form any true idea of *Corruption* till I ſtumbled on that mount myſelf; for I thought I fell from all hope of mercy; I felt myſelf the baſeſt mortal in all the world; my beauty and ſelf-ſufficiency all vaniſhed, and I thought the mount and myſelf were both of a piece, for *all my comelineſs was turned into* CORRUPTION, *and I retained no ſtrength* [for bearing tidings], Dan. x. 8.

CUSHI. Then I ſuppoſe you could hardly credit your own tidings, I mean, *that all was well*, "nor yet praiſe the king, as uſual."

AHIMAAZ.

AHIMAAZ. Indeed I found neither love to the king nor to the loyaliſts; I was all enmity as well as corruption.

CUSHI. You was more fit to carry tidings then, than ever you had been before: I ſuppoſe you found yourſelf in a fine pickle; pray who helped you up?

AHIMAAZ. Indeed, if I had been ſent with tidings then, they would have been heavy tidings, and conſequently I ſhould not have run ſo faſt.

There appeared to me a man with a ſhining countenance, and aſked me what country I was of? I told him I was not a countryman, but a citizen of Jeruſalem, and the ſon of a certain prieſt. He replied, I did not aſk after your deſcent, but your reſidence; if you are a citizen of Jeruſalem, *there is a fountain opened for the inhabitants of that city for ſin and for uncleanneſs*, Zech. xiii. 1. I told him that I could not ſtand. He anſwered, *Let the weak ſay, I am ſtrong*, Joel iii. 10. But I replied, I cannot ſee. He anſwered, *I bring the blind by a way that they know not*, Iſa. xlii. 16. I fell into a kind of a gloomy trance, and was inſenſibly conveyed to a fountain which my mind had ſome glimmering views of: and I found myſelf, in three days after, before Mount Calvary, clothed, becalmed, cleanſed, in perfect peace, and in my right mind: but what I ſaw there, and what I felt, I ſhall never be able to deſcribe; nor how this amazing change was wrought, ſhall I ever be able rightly to relate; for I ſoon found that all my eloquence, and ſublime ſtyle, were intirely inſufficient to relate or repreſent ſo divine an operation, and ſo glorious a change.

CUSHI.

CUSHI. But did you not run to ſome of the king's meſſengers, and tell them the viſion?

AHIMAAZ. Yes; and in this I acted like Daniel, *I was aſtoniſhed at the viſion, but none underſtood it*, Dan. viii. 27.

CUSHI. But did none laugh at it, nor rail againſt it?

AHIMAAZ. Yes; ſome called me a myſtic, ſome a Sadducee, ſome an enthuſiaſt, ſome a fanatic, ſome a Pythagorean, and others an Antinomian; but I knew no more what they meant by theſe names, than they did of my viſion.

CUSHI. 'Tis very well you did not; for they only called you by theſe names, being provoked to jealouſy by your happineſs: they will take care not to explain the meaning of theſe reproachful names, leſt they ſhould appear applicable to themſelves.

AHIMAAZ. They ſeemed to me to be quite ſtrangers to the mount on which I fell, and indeed ſo was I, till I tumbled upon it; for I have often gone over it without feeling its dreadful effects.

CUSHI. Yes; and ſo have many more; but the great MESSIAH, when he ſtood at the foot of the *Mount of Olives*, took particular notice *of the Mount of Corruption. For, in the morning as they paſſed by, they ſaw the fig-tree dried up by the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance, ſaith unto him, maſter, behold the fig-tree which thou curſedſt is withered away. And* JESUS *anſwering, ſaith unto*

them, have faith in GOD. *For verily I ſay unto you, that whoſoever ſhall ſay unto this mountain* [pointing to the Mount of Corruption, which was parted from the Mount of Olives by only a valley], *be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea; and ſhall not doubt in his heart, but ſhall believe that thoſe things which he ſaith ſhall come to paſs; he ſhall have whatſoever he ſaith,* Mark xi. 21, 22, 23.

AHIMAAZ. If you ſee any thing in the MESSIAH's words, my brother, I wiſh you would explain them to me, as I am concerned in their meaning, and have not the leaſt deſire of ſatisfying a vain curioſity.

CUSHI. Depend upon it, my brother, that the MESSIAH never ſpake or did any thing in vain. You ſay you know what the *Mount of Corruption* means, by woful experience; if ſo, when the Saviour pointed to *that mount* in the ſingular number, doubtleſs he meant the *ſins of men*, and the guilt which they have *contracted*, both which go by the name of *corruption*; and when he ſays, *faith ſhall remove it into the ſea*; he means, that thoſe who really believe in a reconciled GOD, through himſelf ſhall find the guilt, and deſtroying power of their ſins, and at laſt the whole body of *corruption* removed for ever; agreeable to this text, *he will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us, he will ſubdue our iniquities, and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the ſea,* Micah vii. 19.

If

If we had faith enough to remove the *Mount of corruption*, no mountain of difficulties would diſcourage us, nor would mount Sinai itſelf terrify us.

AHIMAAZ. I believe you, my brother; for a man's worſt enemies are the corruptions of his own heart; and I believe the main root of all is unbelief. If I had faith enough to pluck up unbelief, I could *ſay to the ſycamine-tree* (mentioned by the MESSIAH), *be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the ſea; and it ſhould obey me*, Luke xvii. 6.

CUSHI. It was that *kind of tree that Zaccheus climbed up into, in order to ſee the Saviour*, Luke xix. 4. If he had climbed up into Ezekiel's *cedar*, I believe the MESSIAH would never have called him down, *for that is to be a refuge for all fowls of every wing*, Ezek. xvii. 22, 23. But pray how did you fare among the meſſengers of the king, after they had heard your viſion.

AHIMAAZ. Why, after all of them had treated me and my viſion with contempt, I began to think lightly of it myſelf, and ſo gradually loſt all the comfort of it. That which gave the greateſt diſguſt to them was, my ſaying it was "a ſovereign "and diſcriminating act of GOD to bring me that "way:" and ſuch an act it was to a demonſtration, becauſe I could find none that underſtood it; but, bleſſed be GOD, I felt the comforts of it, nor do I believe the remembrance of it, nor the effects of it, will ever be loſt; but the word *ſovereign* ſeemed to give great offence among them,

them, as if I would feign myſelf to be a ſingular man; when I only told them the dealings of God with myſelf, that they might paſs their judgment on it, not doubting but they all had experienced the ſame; but as none of them had experienced the like, nor underſtood the viſion, I took it for granted that there was ſomething ſingular in it.

Cushi. Every man muſt ſtand by his own teſtimony, that is yours, and you muſt abide by it: he that would deprive you of it, without convincing you that you are wrong, is both a thief and a robber, and you are no better than Eſau if you give it up; *hold faſt that which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown,* Rev. iii. 11.

Ahimaaz. I bleſs God, the impreſſion and the witneſs is ſtill left, though the joys of it are much abated, and the light of it much obſcured.

For you muſt know that I dropt into the old way of Jewiſh worſhip again; and as I could find no man that underſtood the viſion, but that all condemned it, I ſoon got cold, until a late fit of ſickneſs fell to my lot, to which I reluctantly ſubmitted: but before I recovered, I found ſomething of that ſacred and delightful fire (which is ſo deſpiſed) glow again in my heart; and ſince I have been able to go abroad, I have ſpent the chief of my time in private, and enjoyed my comforts alone; and this is the fartheſt journey that I have taken ſince my recovery. This is the reaſon that you ſee me look ſo poorly; and I think that God

ſent

ſent you to me to caſt a freſh light on this good work upon my ſoul, and I hope I ſhall ever bleſs GOD for thee, and for this happy ſeaſon with thee.

CUSHI. Indeed, my brother, it is my delightful element, to be of uſe to the ſouls of my poor fellow-ſinners; and I do believe that GOD has ſuffered me to meet with hard treatment, both from the world and from his own people alſo, that I might, as an inſtrument in his hand, drop a word in ſeaſon to others who may meet with the ſame. And I would adviſe thee to aim chiefly at a private communion with the great MESSIAH; there is no fellowſhip (but with him) that will enable thee to die happy; and I hope thou wilt never find happineſs ſhort of that, whilſt thou liveſt.

AHIMAAZ. Indeed, if a Chriſtian has no acceſs to his GOD, let him cut what figure he may in the world, his own ſoul is barren, nor does joy and peace in believing operate upon him. Thoſe that called me a *Pythagorean*, becauſe I talked of a change wrought on my ſoul, ſeemed to be as far from enjoying GOD's preſence as thoſe who made no profeſſion at all.

CUSHI. Let men make what ſtir they may about religion, if they have not the love of GOD in their hearts, they are dead; the Spirit ſays, *If a man hath all knowledge, and underſtands all myſteries, and ſpeaks with the tongue of men and of angels, and hath not charity, it profiteth him nothing*, 1 Cor. i. 2, 3. And if ever a man be brought to love GOD, it will be becauſe GOD hath

hath pardoned his ſin: *This woman's ſins were many, and they are forgiven her, and ſhe loveth much; but where little is forgiven the ſame loveth little,* Luke vii. 47. love is therefore the bleſſed effect of pardon, or the conſequence of it.

AHIMAAZ. O how wonderful is the enlarging, enflaming, and attracting power of divine love on the ſoul! it ſwallows up all, and GOD is *all in all* to ſuch an happy ſoul. But, alas, this love is little inſiſted on in our days; indeed it is rather oppoſed.

CUSHI. He that labours only at the letter, is not a miniſter of the Spirit, 2 *Cor.* iii. 6. nor does he exalt the kingdom of GOD, for *that ſtands not in word, but in power,* 1 Cor. iv. 20.

AHIMAAZ. Pray what do you think of David's ſtrong affection for Abſalom? David knew that he was not a good man; nay, he was a rebel againſt his father, and againſt GOD, who anointed him; and he that oppoſed David's kingdom, oppoſed the kingdom of the Meſſiah, for that was included in it, and prefigured by it. Abſalom could be no type of the Meſſiah, who is called *the fruit of David's body.*

CUSHI. The great Meſſiah is the father of all fleſh by creation, as David was of his own family, which conſiſted of bad and good; *Have we not all one father? hath not one* GOD *created us?* Mal. ii. 10. But in an eſpecial manner he is the everlaſting father of all his ſpiritual children, *Iſa.* ix. 6. Abſalom was David's ſon after the fleſh, though not

a par-

a partaker of his father's grace; but Solomon, *the beloved of the* LORD, 2 Sam. xii. 24. was a partaker of his father's grace, as well as a partaker of his nature. And David's weeping over Abſalom, and crying out, *O my ſon Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon*, 2 Sam. xviii. 33, may prefigure the ſympathetic feelings of the Meſſiah's humanity for Iſrael after the fleſh, when he wept over Jeruſalem, and ſaid, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem*, Matt. xxiii. 37.—Luke xix. 41.

AHIMAAZ. Poor David was much perplexed with hypocritical profeſſors in his days; Joab was a bitter plague to him through all his reign, as well as Ahithophel.

CUSHI. I believe Joab prefigured every falſe leader of the LORD's ſaints; and Ahithophel repreſented Judas; one you know hung himſelf as Judas did, and the other was killed at the foot of the altar, as many are, by the ſword of juſtice in a falſe profeſſion.

AHIMAAZ. I have often wondered that Joab ſhould fly for refuge to the horns of the altar.

CUSHI. The altar typified the Saviour, who is a refuge for the diſtreſſed; and Joab might falſely conſtrue the privileges that GOD granted to the *manſlayer*; but Joab's crime was not manſlaughter, for he *killed Amaſa with his ſword while he was kiſſing of him*, 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10. and *ſo ſhed the blood of war in peace*, 1 Kings ii. 5. A wilful murderer has no benefit from the laws granted to the manſlayer. GOD ſays of ſuch, *Thou ſhalt take*

take him from my altar, Exod. xxi. 14. Pray, my brother, have you ever heard of a man that goes by the name of *Prodigality?*

AHIMAAZ. Yes, I think I have; he is one of a ſingular character, if he be the perſon that I mean.

CUSHI. Yes, he is; and it is a name that he has aſſumed, becauſe its wretched ſignification is ſo applicable to himſelf; for, as he ſays, he has been a prodigal from his childhood, and a deſperate rebel againſt Chriſt under it.

AHIMAAZ. Why he has acted as Naomi did, who in a fit of unbelief fled from Bethlehem to Moab, in order to ſecure her property, a famine then reigning in Iſrael; but, inſtead of ſaving all, ſhe loſt all; for ſhe came home childleſs, in widowhood and beggary; ſhe had loſt both her ſons, her huſband, and her property; and then ſhe calls herſelf *Mara*, and deſires them to call her *Naomi* no more; hinting thereby, that what ſhe had took pleaſure in was gone, and bitterneſs had ſucceeded: *For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty; why then call ye me Naomi, ſeeing the Lord hath teſtified againſt me?* Ruth i. 20, 21.

CUSHI. She could ſee that the hand of the LORD was gone out againſt her, but ſhe could not ſee that her feet went out againſt him. If there were no protection for her in Iſrael, ſhe could not expect it in Moab. Thus the *fooliſh-*

neſs of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth againſt the LORD, Prov. xix. 3.

AHIMAAZ. Pray what country man is this *Prodigalis?* I think I have heard that the LORD has called him by grace, if he be the man that I have heard of.

CUSHI. I believe he was born within the walls of ſalvation, and is, as you have heard, called to the knowledge of the truth; he came of religious parents, but he was a moſt wretched deſpiſer of religion; indeed, he is a ſingular monument of mercy; he had a ſtrong memory to contain what he heard, was a man of good underſtanding in the Scriptures, and he had pious parents to copy after. But all theſe will not produce grace. Repentance unto life is the gift of GOD; it is in no man's power to repent of himſelf, nor can a true penitent infuſe repentance into another. Notwithſtanding his hating of religion, he had many ſevere checks of conſcience at times, which he could not hide even from his parents; they kept a ſtrict hand over him in a religious way, and made him attend them at public ordinances, though full ſore againſt his will.

He was their only child, and I believe a child of many prayers and tears; for the ſtate of his ſoul lay with a perpetual weight on his parents, and I believe they travelled hard to ſee CHRIST formed within him.

AHIMAAZ. If he was ſo wickedly bent in heart, the more he knew of religion the greater was his

ſin;

ſin; men in a ſtate of rebellion, with their heads fraught with religious knowledge, are like the *renowned ones* in the antediluvian world; or like the Phariſees, who drew near to GOD with their lips, and honoured him with their lips, while their hearts were far from him.

His poor parents muſt have grief enough to ſee an only child ſuch an enemy to GOD. Pray, did his parents live to ſee their prayers anſwered in his converſion? I have no doubt but they were anſwered *in their own boſom.*

CUSHI. Their prayers were wonderfully anſwered in their ſon's converſion, but they did not live to ſee the pleaſing ſight.

AHIMAAZ. But is it not aſtoniſhing that a child ſhould diſplay ſuch a wretched bent to wickedneſs, in the face of ſo much piety, and practiſe it under the ſevere laſhes of a guilty conſcience? It is as if he was given up intirely to the devil, to ſin in the open face of goſpel light.

CUSHI. It is the eye of juſtice darting his rays on the guilty conſcience that alarms it, and keeps it awake: The devil finding this, he cannot get ſuch a ſoul into a ſtate of carnal ſecurity, *the ſtrong man cannot keep poſſeſſion of ſuch a palace in peace*; therefore, he ſtirs up the enmity of the mind to oppoſe and reſiſt the light; he blows up heat and paſſion, and when he can get ſuch an one to ſin, it is in a deſperate way, that he may ſink the poor ſoul in deſpair, and ſo overwhelm him with guilt and horror. The eye of juſtice is as

terrible to Satan, and his dark kingdom, as it was to Pharoah and his hoſt at the Red Sea. The devil hates the light of truth; hence it is that he ſo often ſtirs up the carnal mind of ſinners, to hate thoſe that long for their ſalvation; the light of truth diſcovers the ſinners ſtate, and Satan's works, which he cannot endure. When our LORD ſent his diſciples out to ſpread the true light, Satan, with all his counterfeited luſtre, ſunk down and ſkulked into his own infernal ſhade, *I ſaw Satan as lightning fall from Heaven*, Luke x. 18. This being the caſe, the devil is obliged to act with an awakened conſcience as the highwayman does with the fearful traveller, do his buſineſs in haſte, and be deſperate in it.

AHIMAAZ. I almoſt wonder that our benign Benefactor did not indulge the pious parents of this poor ſinner with the pleaſing ſight of his converſion before their deceaſe, as you know it muſt have greatly excited their gratitude to GOD; and the LORD ſays, *he that offereth me praiſe glorifieth me.*

CUSHI. The LORD is a ſovereign, and doth as he pleaſes; yet ſeveral reaſons may be aſſigned why the LORD did not thus indulge them: Firſt, As he was their only child, I think he engroſſed too much of their affections: Secondly, They gave him too much indulgence in his childhood, which his rebellion requited them for: Thirdly, Their travelling hard in prayer for him, brought many bleſſings on their own ſouls, and ſerved as

a ſpur to their devotions, under which they ripened for glory; and laſtly, His cruel requital to his parents, helped forward his convictions, when GOD brought in his bill and laid him under a divine arreſt.

AHIMAAZ. The converſion of this man affords a deal of encouragement to praying parents; and I believe it is right for believers to perſevere in prayer for their children, notwithſtanding the diſcouragements that they often meet with; and, indeed, the Meſſiah ſpoke a whole parable to this end, *that men ought always to pray and not to faint.*

CUSHI. We ought to pray for them, and muſt leave the event to GOD, *they that ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy.* Many prayers and tears have been ſcattered about a throne of grace, that have been anſwered afterwards *in a ſhower of bleſſings*, Ezek. xxxiv. 26. And much ſeed has been ſowed in ſinners hearts, that for a while may ſeem to lie dormant, but afterwards it ſheweth itſelf, *And he ſaid, ſo is the kingdom of* GOD, *as if a man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground, and ſhould ſleep, and riſe, night and day, and the ſeed ſhould ſpring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herſelf, firſt the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear*, Mark iv. 26, 27, 28.

AHIMAAZ. Pray how old was the youth when his parents died? Were they people of property? Did they leave him any thing?

CUSHI. I believe he was about fifteen years of age at the death of his father, who left him an apprentice to an attorney at law, and left him with a very conſiderable property; but he ſoon ſpent it, when he got it into his own hands, which I do not wonder at, for as the old people were dotingly fond of him, they were perpetually endeavouring to ſave what they could, in order to leave him in great poſſeſſions; and if I am rightly informed, their anxiety in this matter was their ſin; and for my part, I do believe that whatſoever people get for their children, with an unwarrantable anxiety, ſo as to cloſe the bowels of liberality to all but their own offſpring, do greatly diſhonour GOD by a viſible diſtruſt of his providence; and in reality, they entail a curſe upon all that they leave; and perhaps this was the reaſon why they had ſuch ſtrong *bands in their death*; GOD will purge the ſoul that he ſaves from ſin, if it be by fire.

AHIMAAZ. Their putting their ſon out apprentice to an attorney (a buſineſs in which it is impoſſible for a man to live, and keep a good conſcience towards GOD), and their carefulneſs after this world's goods, gives me room to ſuſpect that divinity never made a very deep impreſſion upon their ſouls; for he that drinketh of the living water that the Saviour gives ſhall never thirſt [after the riches of this LIFE], *But the water that I ſhall give him ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into* EVERLASTING LIFE, *John* iv. 13, 14.

Pray

Pray did you know them, or do you go by report?

CUSHI. I have ſeen them, but had no acquaintance with them; though they are reported to be ſingularly pious, yet I know it is not all gold that ſhines, nor are they all maids that paſs for ſuch, and wear white aprons. I know the beſt of ſaints are burdened with the remains of corrupt nature, which, at times, has broke out and left its ſpots in the brighteſt characters, as inceſt in Lot, exceſs in Noah, adultery in David, and blaſphemy in Peter; yet there are ſome ſins that they ſtand clear of, I mean ſuch as are real partakers of the Holy Ghoſt.

AHIMAAZ. Pray, my brother, what are thoſe ſins that you ſuppoſe every inſpired ſoul to ſtand free from? For my part I would wiſh to ſtand for ever free from all; for it is the death of all real comfort, as well as a great diſhonour to GOD, and a ſweet morſel to them that eat up the ſin of GOD's people.

CUSHI. I think there are two ſins which are not found in the dark catalogue of any gracious character in the Bible. One ſin is what the law calls *preſumption*, Num. xv. 30. which David calls *the great tranſgreſſion*, Pſalm xix. 13. which John calls *the ſin unto death*, 1 John v. 16. but CHRIST calls it *the unpardonable ſin*, Mat. xii. 31.

The other ſin is covetouſneſs, for this ſin GOD was wroth with Iſrael and ſmote him, and of this he promiſes *to heal him*, Iſaiah lvii. 17, 18.

Paul

Paul calls it *the root of all evil*, 1 Tim. vi. 10. and *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. which the Saviour calls *the ſervice of mammon*, Mat. vi. 24.; and pronounces *a woe* on all ſuch ſervants, Luke vi. 24, 25. To the beſt of my knowledge, I do not remember that ever *daring preſumption*, and the *love of money*, are once filed among any of the bills that God hath brought in againſt a real citizen of Zion; his character excludes both theſe, Pſalm xv. Theſe are the two ſins againſt which David levels the force of his prayers, *Keep back thy ſervant from preſumptuous ſins*, Pſalm xix. 13. *Incline my heart unto thy teſtimonies, and not to covetouſneſs*, Pſalm cxix. 36. Both theſe are the devil's own *marks*, and I defy all the world to prove them to be marks of a ſaint; wherever we find any thus marked, we may ſay, *They have corrupted themſelves; their ſpot is not the ſpot of the children* [of God]; *they are a perverſe and crooked generation*, Deut. xxxii. 5.

Ahimaaz. I have often wondered why Paul calls *the love of money the root of all evil.* The apoſtle ſeems to intimate, that one ſingle root is ſufficient to produce the whole crop of wickedneſs: I wonder what he makes the root of all godlineſs to be?

Cushi. The root of all vital godlineſs is the love of God, operating on the affections of a regenerate ſoul, and this love is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, which is given unto us; this is Paul's root, be ye *rooted and grounded*

grounded in love, Eph. iii. 17. Job tells you, this root of the matter was found in him, as was before hinted; and falſe profeſſors, not having *this root in them is the cauſe of their withering away*, Matt. xiii. 6.

Theſe two roots are clearly ſeen in the ten commandments; for that which is therein required, is love to GOD and thy neighbour; and he that loveth GOD and his neighbour hath fulfilled the law; *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law*, Rom. xiii. 10. As *love* includes all obedience to the law; ſo covetouſneſs includes all diſobedience, *Thou ſhalt not covet*, Exod. xx. 17. *I had not known ſin but by the law: for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet*, Romans vii. 7.

AHIMAAZ. By the apoſtle's calling the love of money a root, it muſt take a deep hold in man; and if ſo, nothing but the grace of GOD can root it up.

CUSHI. Salvation, applied to the ſinner's conſcience by the Spirit of grace, will do it, and nothing elſe; *There was a man named Zaccheus, who was chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he ſought to ſee Jeſus who he was. And he ran before, and climbed up into a ſycamore-tree. But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Zaccheus, make haſte, and come down: for to-day I muſt abide at thy houſe. And when they* [the LORD's followers] *ſaw it, they all murmured, ſaying, That he was gone to be gueſt to a man*

man that is a ſinner. And Zaccheus ſtood, and ſaid unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him four-fold. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe, foraſmuch as he alſo is a ſon of Abraham. Luke xix. 2—9. Thus the preſence of the LORD, and his ſalvation, applied by the Spirit of grace, opens the contracted bowels of a worldling, and makes him diſgorge half his property at once. This ſhews the purging quality of grace, *Every branch in me that beareth fruit my Father purgeth it,* John xv. 2. If a choſen veſſel *hath ſwallowed down riches* [when grace is revealed] it makes *him vomit them up again:* GOD *ſhall caſt them out of his belly,* Job xx. 15.

AHIMAAZ. Excuſe my breaking in upon your diſcourſe, which I ſhould not have done, but I think you are wrong in excluding covetouſneſs from the ſins of Bible ſaints. You know we are all fallible creatures, and liable to err; I think the church of the Laodiceans is charged with covetouſneſs, and that in expreſs terms, *Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing,* Rev. iii. 17.

CUSHI. I do not pretend to infallibility; that belongs to GOD: Nor do I deny what you ſay of the Laodicean church; I take it for granted that there were ſome real ſaints in that church; but thoſe whom the Saviour's charge concerned, are ſaid to be altogether ignorant of their ſtate,

[Thou]

[Thou] *knoweſt not, that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked,* Rev. iii. 17. If theſe covetous profeſſors were ignorant, wretched, miſerable, poor, blind, and naked, they were as deſtitute of grace as ever Judas was; and if they were not graceleſs, they would not ſtand in need of being *counſelled to buy of the Saviour gold tried in the fire that they might be rich: and white raiment that they might be clothed, and that the ſhame of their nakedneſs might not appear; and to anoint their eyes with eye-ſalve, that they might ſee,* Rev. iii. 18.

The love of money, the root of all evil, can never be rooted in a ſoil where the love of GOD keeps a proper hold; it is a ſin that hell itſelf will never purge a ſoul from, any more than the ſight of a gallows will deſtroy the love of evil in a felon who is going reluctantly to receive, at the hand of juſtice, the dreadful *wages of unrighteouſneſs,* Rom. vi. 23.

Mammon, that fallen angel, has been in the horrors of hell nigh ſix thouſand years, yet, to this day, he tempts thouſands to covetouſneſs, and thouſands are influenced with his diſpoſition; yea, they ſerve him with delight, and are in friendſhip with him, though CHRIST declares, that when they fail of heaven, they ſhall ſpend an eternity with him in hell, *And I ſay unto you, make to yourſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations,* Luke xvi. 10. Be not

offended at my aſſerting that hell itſelf will not purge a ſoul from ſin; hell is not intended to be a place of purgation, as ſome affirm, but a place of puniſhment. 2 *Theſ.* i. 9.

AHIMAAZ. Well, I cannot contradict thee, my brother, but do let me hear a little of the converſion of Prodigalis; for I can take comfort in the repentance of a ſinner, but to hear of their wickedneſs is rather a terror to me.

CUSHI. So can I; and am determined, through grace, to labour hard as long as I live to be inſtrumental, if GOD pleaſe, in bringing ſinners to repentance. After Mr. Prodigalis had waſted all his ſubſtance with riotous living, he became melancholy, his paſt conduct began to recoil on his mind with the ſenſible impreſſions of guilt; this quenched his popular ſpirit, and reduced his vigorous faculties to the gloomy receſſes of ſilent ſolitude. Retirement beſt ſuited the melancholy frame of his mind; he abandoned all company, and choſe to wander in the moſt dreary paths, as judging himſelf unfit for ſociety. In one of his ſolitary walks he was inſenſibly brought into a gloomy vale, where he was led in a viſion to ſee the true ſtate of his ſoul in the ſight of GOD. This valley can only be ſeen in a viſion:—*The hand of the* LORD *was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the* LORD, *and ſet me down in the midſt of the valley which was full of dry bones, and cauſed me to paſs by them round about; and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.*

dry. And he ſaid unto me, Son of man, can theſe bones live? Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 2, 3. In this valley he ſaw his awful ſtate; it was impreſſed upon his mind that the valley repreſented the fall of man, or *the ſinner's low eſtate*, Pſalm cxxxvi. 23. The bones repreſented death, the trophies of ſin and Satan, *Rom.* v. 12; and their being *very dry*, exhibited the barren and fruitleſs ſtate of a ſoul in the ſight of God, which is compared here to *dry bones*, and by the prophet Iſaiah to *dry ground*, Iſa. xliv. 3. which repreſents the ſoul to be dead, without any affection to God, and without any motion toward him.

Ahimaaz. Indeed that is the true ſtate of a ſinner before he be quickened by the Holy Ghoſt; he is under the ſentence of the law, and under the ſentence of his own conſcience; as John declares, *He that believes not is condemned already*, John iii. 18. *He is ſubverted, and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf*, Tit. iii. 11. And with reſpect to life or motion toward God, he hath none; as the Apoſtle witneſſeth, *You hath he quickened who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, Eph. ii. 1. and I believe the Saviour meant this when he ſaid to one of his diſciples, *Let the dead bury their dead*, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God; certainly he meant, let thoſe that are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins bury thoſe that departed this life in their ſins, or in an unpardoned ſtate.

Cushi.

CUSHI. What you have ſaid is true; man, fallen man, is dead in law, and under the ſentence of it, and ſpiritually dead to GOD, deſtitute of all good, either feeling, affection, or motion; and as he daily heaps up ſin upon ſin, ſo treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath. The ſcriptures repreſent him as buried in his own tranſgreſſions: *Then he ſaid unto me, Son of man, theſe bones are the whole houſe of Iſrael; behold, they ſay, Our bones are dried, and our hope is loſt, we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy, and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the* LORD GOD, *Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cauſe you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Iſrael. And ye ſhall know that I am the* LORD, *when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves. And ſhall put my ſpirit in you, and ye ſhall live, and I ſhall place you in your own land; then ſhall ye know that I the* LORD *have ſpoken it, and performed it ſaith the* LORD, Ezek. xxxvii. 11.—14. Thus, my dear brother, you ſee the *low eſtate of man*, repreſented by this *valley*; his ſpiritual death by the *bones*; his *ſpiritual death*, I ſay, for theſe men were not literally dead; the barrenneſs of his ſoul while in an hopeleſs ſtate, is repreſented by the *dryneſs* of the *bones*; and the tranſgreſſions that his ſoul is involved in, by the *graves*; and his ſpiritual reſurrection, is by the power of GOD—*I will bring you up out of your graves*; and the quickening of his

dead

dead ſoul is done by the Spirit—*I ſhall put my ſpirit in you, and ye ſhall live.*

AHIMAAZ. I bleſs GOD that ever I met with thee. The LORD has given thee a bleſſed talent for opening the ſcriptures. You have made this matter very plain to me. Let the free-willer boaſt of his will and power as much as he will, GOD in that viſion repreſents man deſtitute of both; and a ſoul dead to GOD, and buried in his own tranſgreſſions, can do no more toward his own ſpiritual reſurrection, than a dead corpſe can do toward the reſurrection of the body. GOD ſays he brings them out of their graves, and he puts his ſpirit in them; no call for this if a man hath will and power ſufficient of his own; to the power of GOD, and the ſpirit of his grace, is aſcribed the quickening and converſion of every ſaint in the Bible; but not one inſpired penman in all GOD's book ever boaſted of his natural will or power, or ever attributed any thing that accompanies ſalvation to either, but to the ſovereign will and omnipotent power of GOD only.

CUSHI. Why you begin to talk like an orthodox divine; that is *a ſound ſpeech that cannot be condemned.* Tit. ii. 8.

A free-willer can no more raiſe himſelf up, and go to the Saviour by his own power, than a dead corpſe can raiſe itſelf out of the grave and go to the judgment ſeat. It requires more power to quicken and raiſe up a dead ſoul to ſpiritual life, than it does to raiſe up a dead body.

body. The mouldered duſt will make no more reſiſtance than the paſſive earth did while GOD formed Adam; but the rebellious ſoul will reſiſt to the laſt; like a deſperate criminal under ſentence, it will kill or be killed.

No ſooner does the eye of juſtice dart a ray on the guilty conſcience, but, like the Egyptians, he flies: *The* LORD *looked upon the hoſt of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire, ſo that the Egyptians ſaid, Let us flee*, Exod. xiv. 24, 25. Thus the *ſinner rebels againſt the light*, Job xxiv. 13. *He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.* John iii. 20. Here is the ſtrong oppoſition from the enmity of the mind; the poor ſleeping duſt of the body will never make this reſiſtance. When the LORD ſpeaketh, *Earth, diſcloſe your blood, and no more cover your ſlain*, Iſa. xxvi. 21. it is done, *they ſhall move out of their holes like worms of the earth*, Micah vii. 17; here is no more reſiſtance than what the power of the worm repreſents. But when GOD comes to raiſe a dead ſoul, not only the underſtanding ſkulks from the light, but every faculty is engaged in the oppoſition. Let GOD give a poſitive command, and he receives an anſwer pregnant with the utmoſt reſentment. *Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He anſwered, and ſaid, I will not.* Matt. xxi. 28, 29. Let a miniſter repreſent the excellency and ſuitableneſs of a Saviour, and the anſwer is, *He hath no form nor comelineſs, and when we ſee him there*

is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him. Iſa. liii. 2. Thus the carnal underſtanding ſhuns the rays of light, the mind diſcovers its enmity, the will expreſſes the utmoſt reſentment, and the affections are altogether alienated from GOD, and fixed upon one idol or other; ſome dote on pleaſure, others on wealth, others upon honour, others upon human learning, and all upon ſin. Not one thought for GOD, until an almighty power take it priſoner, and by love make it a willing captive; *Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of* CHRIST. 2 *Cor.* iv. 5.

AHIMAAZ. Why, this is GOD's teſtimony of human frailty, and what every eminent ſaint in tne bible has confeſſed and confirmed, by the long catalogue of their own ſinful weakneſſes: but is it not amazing that men will daringly give the teſtimony of GOD and his ſaints the lie, by crying up the will and power of fallen man, to believe, to come, and to cloſe in with the Saviour?

CUSHI. As for the Saviour, they ought to leave him quite out of the queſtion. If man is not fallen, there is no call for help; if he be not dead, there is no need of the gift of eternal life; if man has a will, no call for GOD to make him willing; if he has a power of his own, no call for a divine power to be put forth; and if he be not loſt, no call for ſalvation by grace: but, alas! they are like the Roman catholics, whoſe hearts may be compared to a field of battle, where pride and

conſcience are at war all the year round. Aſk a papiſt how he is to be juſtified? Pride anſwers, by works. Aſk if he can keep the law? The anſwer is, Yes; and gave it an obedience that exceeds the command, even works of ſupererogation, more than the law requires; aſk conſcience what ſhe thinks of juſtification, and acceptance with GOD by ſuperabounding works; and her anſwer will be this, you muſt judge of our heart by our actions. If we thought that our works would juſtify us, and bring in GOD himſelf a debtor to us (as we talk), we ſhould not be at the pains of praying to thirty or forty *mediators* and *interceſſors*; nor ſhould we buy *pardons and abſolutions*, nor give ſuch large ſums to trading prieſts to pray us out of hell when we are dead; you would hear nothing of this if all were right within; therefore you muſt judge of our faith by theſe fruits. Juſt ſo it is with an Arminian; let conſcience gripe him, and he talks of the righteouſneſs of CHRIST and free grace; but if a few dead works make conſcience lie quiet, then pride and ſelf-will contradict all that conſcience ſaid; this appears throughout all their writings: thus they rebel in the face of truth, and oppoſe the verdict and ſentence of their own thoughts and conſcience. It requires a greater power to raiſe a dead ſoul to the life of faith, than to raiſe a dead body to life and action.

Lazarus, come forth! the command was inſtantly obeyed, though the body was fettered with a wind-

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ing-ſheet; *he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin*, John xi. 43, 44.

AHIMAAZ. According to your account of popery and Arminianiſm, which you ſeem to view as one ſyſtem, they are under the ſame conteſt that Nicodemus was; his conſcience told him that JESUS was the great Meſſiah; this he owned, *we believe that thou art a teacher come from* GOD, *for no man can do the miracles that thou doeſt, except* GOD *be with him.* And yet his pride oppoſed his conſcience; *have any of the rulers believed on him?* and if I go to him for tuition, what becomes of my infallibility and reputation? Thus he ſtands *at the ſtraight gate*, and his own pride made the ſtraight. Had he obeyed the voice of the inward teſtimony that the Saviour's miracles produced, without conſulting his reputation, *he would have been removed out of that ſtraight into a broad place, where there is no ſtraightneſs*, Job xxxvi. 16. But in order to keep up his reputation, and palm his conſcience too, he acts the part of *Guy Faux*, goes by night, until he ſees the crucifixion of the Saviour, and the judgments that attended his dying cry. Then he appears, and publicly owns the dead temple, though before aſhamed to own the living GOD, that for above thirty years had dwelt in it, and diſplayed no leſs than omnipotent power from it. His pride procured him juſt cauſe for cutting regret.

AHIMAAZ. Indeed, my brother, *the fear of man bringeth a ſnare; but whoſo putteth his truſt*

in the LORD *ſhall be ſafe*, Prov. xxix. 25. And I believe thouſands have been, and ſtill are, taken in that ſnare; *they love* (as the Saviour ſays) *the praiſe of men, more than the praiſe of* GOD, John xii. 43. This is awful, as the LORD declares, that *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of him and of his words in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels*, Mark viii. 38. But do let me hear a little more of the LORD's proceedings with *Prodigalis*, for I dearly love to hear of converting work going on.

CUSHI. Why, bleſſed be GOD, he is alive from the dead, as the Scripture ſays, *Bleſſed and holy is he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection; on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power*, Rev. xx. 6.

AHIMAAZ. Pray what do you ſuppoſe the Holy Ghoſt means by that text? does he mean the pre-eminence of the Saints at the general reſurrection? or does he mean the Saints riſing to newneſs of life by the quickening power of the Holy Ghoſt at regeneration?

CUSHI. Doubtleſs, the pre-eminence of the Saints at the general reſurrection is implied, becauſe it is revealed, that *the dead in* CHRIST *ſhall riſe firſt*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. The Saint ſhall have the pre-eminence in that day. This their [wicked] way is their folly, yet their poſterity approve their ſayings; *like ſheep they are laid in the grave; death ſhall feed on them; and the upright ſhall have dominion over them in the morning*, Pſ. xlix. 14. Thus you

you ſee, the dead in CHRIST ſhall riſe firſt; the upright ſhall have dominion in that morning, when the *Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe; as the lightning cometh out of the eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the weſt, ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of Man be*, Matth. xxiv. 27.

AHIMAAZ. Pray what is meant by the *dead in* CHRIST?

CUSHI. There are two heads, who repreſent all the offspring of Adam; and every individual dies a member, in union with one of thoſe heads. The man that believes in CHRIST, hath righteouſneſs and ſtrength in CHRIST; and being joined to CHRIST, is of one ſpirit with him; *he that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. By virtue of his ſpiritual union, he is a part of the myſtical *body of* CHRIST, *and a member in particular*, 1 Cor. xii. 27. This union was from all eternity between CHRIST and the elect; but it is not revealed till regeneration; bleſſed are they that follow the LORD *in the regeneration; they ſhall ſit on thrones*, Matth. xviii. 28.

As members of CHRIST by grace, and in union with him by the ſpirit, they live in this world; and as his members in union they accordingly die, hence they are ſaid to die in him. *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the* LORD, *from henceforth; yea, ſaith the ſpirit, that they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them*, Rev. xiv. 13. Perſons thus departed are called by the apoſtle, *the dead in* CHRIST.

CHRIST is called the *ſecond Adam*, *the* LORD *from heaven*, *the quickening ſpirit*; and thoſe that die members of this heavenly head, are to be like him; *as is the heavenly* [head], *ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly* [members], 1 Cor. xv. 48. *And as we have borne the image of the earthy* [head before converſion], *we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly* [head being converted], 1 Cor. xv. 49.

On the other hand, Adam is the fallen head of all that are in the fleſh, or in their firſt-born ſtate, —never born again of the Spirit; hence they are called fleſhly children; that is, *they that are the children of the fleſh*, *theſe are not the children of God*, Rom. ix. 8.

CHRIST and Adam are the two heads, the repreſentatives of all the children of men: *And ſo it is written*, *the firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul*; *the laſt Adam a quickening ſpirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Theſe are the two heads; one is called *ſpiritual*, and the other *natural*, verſe 46. CHRIST is the head of all the elect, they were choſen in him; and Adam is the head of all the reprobate: *The firſt man is of the earth*, *earthly*, *the ſecond man is the* LORD *from heaven*, verſe 47. Thoſe that die in their firſt born ſtate, die members of fallen Adam, and are in the fleſh, being deſtitute of the ſpirit; ſuch *are not the children of* GOD, but of the fleſh, and *fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of* GOD, 1 Cor. xv. 50.

Theſe are ſaid not to fall aſleep in the LORD, but to die, yea for ever; *if ye live after the fleſh*, *ye ſhall die*, Rom. viii. 13. and if ſo, they die in their

their ſins. This is the caſe with every unbeliever; *If ye believe not that I AM, ye ſhall die in your ſins*, John viii. 24. Thoſe expreſſions I AM ſignify the ſelf-exiſtence, ſelf-complacence, independence, and eternity of Jehovah the Saviour. The pronoun *I* excludes all others in point of dependence; and the word *AM* excludes both the *paſt* and the *future tenſes*, and is expreſſive of his eternity. This name was revealed before the human nature was aſſumed—*And* GOD *ſaid unto Moſes, I AM that I AM; and he ſaid, Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael, I AM hath ſent me unto you. And* GOD *ſaid moreover unto Moſes, Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael, The* LORD GOD *of your fathers, the* GOD *of Abraham, the* GOD *of Iſaac, and the* GOD *of Jacob, hath ſent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this my memorial unto all generations.* Exod. iii. 14, 15. The firſt verſe includes the ſelf-exiſtence and eternity of our Saviour's deity; the ſecond verſe includes him as the GOD, the guard, and portion of all the faithful, as he was to Abraham; the portion of every heir of promiſe, as he was to Iſaac; and of every prevailer with him in prayer, as he was to Jacob. His revealing himſelf the GOD of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, excludes Iſhmael and Eſau, to ſhew he is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living, *Matt.* xxii. 32. This name the Saviour applies to himſelf—*If ye believe not that I AM, ye ſhall die in your ſins.*

AHIMAAZ. You differ much in principles from the Arian.

CUSHI. The Arian never knew the LORD, therefore he had better let him alone; his caſe is deſperate; he has but one ground of hope left according to his own creed.

AHIMAAZ. Pray what is that?

CUSHI. Why if the Saviour's teſtimony be a lie, and if the whole Bible be falſe, there is ground of hope for him; but if GOD the Father's teſtimony be true, *Heb.* i. 8. if the Holy Ghoſt's witneſs be true, *Matt.* xxii. 43, 44. if the witneſs of angels be true, *Luke* ii. 11. and if the Saviour's witneſs be true, *Rev.* i. 8. he muſt be damned; *If ye believe not that I AM, ye ſhall die in your ſins*; and *he that believes not ſhall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16. Thus, if Father, Son, and Spirit, have borne a falſe teſtimony, there is hope for the Arian; but if a true one, he *has brought in a damnable hereſy, even denying the* LORD *that bought us, and ſhall bring upon himſelf ſwift deſtruction*, 2 Pet. ii. 1.

AHIMAAZ. I beg pardon, my brother, for breaking in upon your diſcourſe, but I obſerved that in your deſcription of the two heads and repreſentatives of the two families, which are called children of promiſe, and children of the fleſh, you ſeem to differ in judgment from many learned men; I mean upon the apoſtle's words—*For ſince by man came death, by man came alſo the reſurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 21,

xv. 21, 22. Many learned men from that text attempt to prove the death of all mankind in the firſt Adam, and the reſurrection to life of all mankind in CHRIST the ſecond Adam.

CUSHI. If all die in Adam, there is not a ſoul in heaven; and if all are made alive in CHRIST, there is not a ſoul in hell. The prepoſition *in* implies *union*, and the particle *all* implies *members*. To handle the text otherwiſe is contradicting and giving the lie to a third part of the Bible. The elect do not die in Adam, for he never was the choſen head of GOD's elect, nor were the elect choſen in him; and although they fell in the firſt Adam, they are not reſtored *in* or *by* him; for they had life in the ſecond Adam before ever they fell in the firſt. They that die in Adam, die eternally, for he is not the ſpiritual head; and they that die in CHRIST live eternally, for he is their vital head; GOD is not the GOD *of the dead, but of the living*. Whichever head a man dies in, he will ariſe in the *image* and *order* of that head; *For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive: But every man in his own order*, 1 Cor. xv. 23. When the Saviour ſays to the wicked, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, Matt. xxv. 41. will any man ſay that thoſe are *made alive in* CHRIST? And yet, upon a ſingle particle, the whole myſtery of univerſal redemption is raiſed; and the ſalvation of all the world eſtabliſhed. But does not the

judge

judge of quick and dead handle the text as I have done? Does he not bleſs thoſe that are in him, and curſe thoſe that are in Adam's fall? If ſuch a univerſal doctrine could be preached in hell, there is not a reprobate there but would give it the lie.

Ahimaaz. You have ſatisfied me, my brother, and I ſee the Saviour on the judgment ſeat confirms your ſenſe of the text; and as the Saviour's deciſion juſtifies you, you cannot be wrong; let men put what conſtruction they will upon a text, if the Saviour contradicts it at the day of judgment, it is falſe.

But do let me hear a little more of Prodigalis; we left him, if you remember, dead in the valley of dry bones; and you promiſed to relate his ſpiritual reſurrection, which I ſhould be glad to hear, and whether there be any analogy between the firſt and the ſecond reſurrection.

Cushi. There is a juſt analogy; I have ſhewed you that a ſinner is ſpiritually dead and buried from the prophecy of Ezekiel, even as the body is dead and buried in a grave of earth. An unbeliever, though a choſen veſſel, is ſaid to be aſleep in his ſins, as a dead body ſleeps in the grave, and both muſt be awakened and raiſed. The Saviour ſpeaks of both theſe, as it were, in one breath; of the ſpiritual reſurrection he ſpeaketh thus, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, the hour is coming, and now is* (come), *when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of* God, *and they that*

hear ſhall live, John v. 25. Of the reſurrection of the body he ſpeaketh after this manner—*Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation*, John v. 28, 29. The dead bodies are to be alarmed by the ſound of the archangel's trumpet; *For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God*, 1 Theſ. iv. 16. A goſpel miniſter is called an *angel*, Rev. iii. 1. Preaching the alarming word of GOD, is called ſounding the trumpet;—*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and ſound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh; for it is nigh at hand*, Joel ii. 1.

This was the caſe with Prodigalis; there came a *watch-man* into the *valley of dry bones*, and ſounded the trumpet, which alarmed the conſcience of the poor man—*he heard the ſound of the trumpet*, Ezek. xxxiii. 5. Thus the dead ſoul is alarmed by the angel's trumpet, as dead bodies are to be. Secondly, the ſleeping body is not only to be alarmed, but it is to be awakened, and brought to judgment;—*And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall wake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt*, Dan. xii. 2. Thus the ſleeping body is awakened and brought to judgment; ſo in like manner is the ſleeping ſinner awakened and brought to the light, which is

GOD;

GOD; for GOD *is light*;—*Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and* CHRIST *ſhall give thee light*, Eph. v. 14. Thirdly, the archangel's trumpet is to be attended with the powerful voice of the Saviour—*All that are in their graves ſhall hear his voice and come forth.* The goſpel trumpet is attended by the ſame voice—*The time is now come when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God.*

Thus you ſee, that as the departed body is ſaid to be dead, to be aſleep, and to be in the grave; ſo an unconverted ſoul is ſaid to be *dead*, to be *aſleep*, and to be *in the grave* alſo. In raiſing the body an angel is employed, *Matt.* xxiv. 31. a trumpet is ſounded, 1 *Cor.* xv. 52. the LORD's voice is heard, *John* v. 28. the body is alarmed, awakened, *Dan.* xii. 2. raiſed up, 1 *Cor.* xv. 52. and brought to judgment, *Eccl.* xi. 9. So in raiſing a dead ſoul, an angel by office is employed, *Rev.* iii. 1. the goſpel trumpet is ſounded, *Iſaiah* xxvii. 13. the LORD's voice is heard, *John* v. 25. the ſoul is alarmed, *Joel* ii. 1. it is awakened, *Eph.* v. 14. raiſed, *Eph.* ii. 6. and brought forth to the light, and GOD is light, to be arraigned and chaſtened for his iniquity, that he may be juſtified here, and not condemned in the great day;—*But when we are judged we are chaſtened of the* LORD, *that we ſhould not be condemned with the world*, 1 Cor. xi. 32.

This was the caſe with Prodigalis; his conſcience was alarmed, his underſtanding awakened, and the LORD's voice quickened his dead

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ſoul to feel his guilt; he was raiſed from his carnal ſecurity, and brought forth from a ſtate of ſpiritual death and inſenſibility; and after this he took his trial as really as any will do in the day of judgment. And at the general judgment, when the Judge is ſeated, *the books will be opened*, Dan. vii. 10. and ſo poor Prodigalis found at his trial, for both law, goſpel, and conſcience were point blank againſt him.

AHIMAAZ. Then, according to your account, there is not only a firſt and ſecond reſurrection, but a firſt and laſt judgment alſo.

CUSHI. There certainly is; and the word *juſtification* implies a trial here; the elect are tried in this life, and juſtified by faith in the Saviour. Hence they are ſaid to *paſs from death to life, and ſhall never come into condemnation*; which implies, that there was a miniſtration of death that they were arraigned at, and found dead under, and a ſentence that they eſcaped; elſe how could they paſs from *death* to *life* by faith, and for ever eſcape *condemnation?*

AHIMAAZ. I do not remember any paſſage of ſcripture that favours your opinion.

CUSHI. I think there are many ſcriptures that favour it; *For the time is come that judgment muſt begin at the houſe of* GOD; *and if it firſt begin at us, what ſhall the end be of them that obey not the goſpel of* GOD? *And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?* 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. In that text the deſtruction of Iſrael

by the Romans may be implied, which was to begin at the temple or houſe of God; but Peter was no part of that, therefore more is intended by Peter's ſaying, *Judgment begins at us.* The deſtruction of the temple was a fulfilment of this prophecy—*Slay utterly old and young, both maids, little children, and women, and begin at my ſanctuary*, Ezek. ix. 5, 6. Secondly, the arraignment and martyrdom of the ſaints may be implied in that text, but the ſpiritual judgment of the elect in this world is not excluded; nor is it excluded in the following text—*For, for this cauſe was the goſpel preached alſo to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the Spirit*, 1 Pet. iv. 6.

The Lord hath often diſcovered himſelf as an angry judge to a ſinner from the pulpit; and has ſpoke to his conſcience by the preacher, ſufficient to convince him of his awful ſtate; even his inmoſt thoughts have been diſcovered and laid open, and he has found himſelf in the powerful hand, and at the very bar of God, convicted of all his crimes, the very ſentence ſounding in his ears, and his ſoul ſinking into all the horrors of a condemned criminal; which has made him tremble no leſs than a condemned ſinner will do in the day of judgment; as it is written, *But if ye prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt; and ſo, falling down on his face, he will worſhip God,*

God, and report that God is in you of a truth, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

Thus you ſee the operation of the word and ſpirit of GOD; when the LORD ſpeaketh to the heart, the rebel is arraigned, judged, and condemned, both by law and conſcience, — and would ſink to all eternity, if GOD did not impute an everlaſting righteouſneſs to him; but the choſen ſinner has an advocate, and therefore his trial does not end in eternal death, but in a fatherly chaſtiſement; as it is written—*But when we are judged we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world,* 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

AHIMAAZ. I would wiſh to hear the trial of Prodigalis, if my brother would relate it; and pray be ſo kind as to bring in the word of GOD to ſhew the conſiſtency of his arraignment therewith; for you know that muſt be the touchſtone that all things muſt be tried by;—even the ſpirit, the practice, and the principles of a believer muſt be tried by that.

CUSHI. Very true; and I ſhall be glad to prove the trial, and the juſtification of this poor ſinner, by that immutable ſtandard. After Prodigalis had been alarmed, awakened, quickened to feel his guilt, and raiſed out of his dead ſtate of carnal ſecurity, he gave himſelf wholly up to retirement and melancholy, as being fit company for none but thoſe of the ſame caſt. In one of his ſolitary walks he came to a lonely grove,

grove, which is well known to thouſands; and having a clear view, and a feeling ſenſe of his loſt eſtate, *he lift up his voice and wept, and he called the name of that place Bochim*, Judges ii. 4. 5. and it is called *the place of mourners* to this day.

At the end of *mourning grove* there is a little valley, and on the ſouth ſide of it, at the foot of an hill, is a little encloſed ſpot, walled round, and planted with *dwarf evergreens*. Prodigalis attempted an entrance into it, but met with a rebuff, and had the gate ſhut againſt him. He then made an attempt to climb over the wall, but he felt himſelf ſenſibly reſiſted—*God reſiſteth the proud*. This wrought ſuch diſtraction and confuſion in his mind, that he fainted away, and lay for ſome hours in a trance, during which time he had a viſion;—*He ſaw by night, and behold, a man riding upon a red horſe, and he ſtood among myrtle trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were red horſes ſpangled and white*, Zech. i. 8.

Prodigalis had the uſe of all his faculties;—but whether he was in the body, or out of it, he could not tell. His mind was impreſſed with awful thoughts of the *grand aſſize*; and the horſes that he ſaw in the viſion he took to belong to the retinue of his judge, who was viſiting thoſe parts in his perpetual circuit. And indeed he was not miſtaken, for the horſes belonged to the chariots of God, and were a part of *the twenty thouſand that always attended him*, Pſalm lxviii. 17. The

poor

poor man was forcibly ſeized, and led in the viſion by a ſtrong hand to a lofty hill, the top of which was covered with a pillar of ſmoke; the middle of it was all on a flame of fire, and juſt under the fire hung a heavy dark cloud; before that cloud Prodigalis was placed;—nor was it in his power to move one ſtep from it, *though he fain would have fled out of his hand*, Job xxvii. 22.

Out of the midſt of that black cloud a ſupernatural light broke forth, and forcibly darted its beams on the whole ſoul of Prodigalis. As ſoon as this light ſhone upon him, all the corruptions of his heart boiled up, *as the fire cauſeth the water to boil*, Iſa. lxiv. 2.—*His iniquities were ſet before his judge, and his ſecret ſins in the light of his countenance*, Pſ. xc. 8. He ſaw himſelf in his true colours indeed; for his polluted ſoul was diſcovered in ſuch a loathſome condition, that no leper was ever ſo corrupted in body as he appeared to be in ſoul; *from head to foot there was no ſoundneſs,—all was wounds, bruiſes, and putrifying ſores*, Iſa. i. 6. he was a leper in the worſe ſenſe, and many *filthy rags he had laid on to cover his wounds*, Iſaiah lxiv. 6. But, alas, his *ſpiritual defilements*, and his *legal coverings*, were both of a piece, inſomuch that he might truly be ſaid to be *clothed with filthy garments*, Zech. iii. 3.

In this deplorable and moſt miſerable condition, he found an accuſer ſtanding cloſe to him upon the right hand;—and he infuſed into his mind ſuch enmity againſt the light that ſhined,

and ſuggeſted ſuch evils and hard thoughts againſt the judge as are ſhocking to mention. Thus ſtood Prodigalis, *clothed in his filthy garments*, filled with ſhame and confuſion of face, even *before the angel of the Lord, and Satan ſtanding at his right hand to reſiſt him*, Zech. iii. 1.

In this periſhing ſtate, bitten with the *gnawing worm* of a guilty conſcience, he found another enemy on his left ſide, threatening every moment to put a period to his exiſtence; and if that had been permitted, he was ſure that his accuſer would gain an awful conqueſt over him, and an eternal poſſeſſion of him. No free-will, no human power, no ſelf-righteouſneſs can ſtand here;—Prodigalis found this;—theſe things blaſted all his ſuppoſed power and free-will; *His ſtrength was hunger bitten, and deſtruction was ready at his ſide. This devoured the ſtrength of his ſkin; the firſt born of death devoured his ſtrength*, Job xviii. 12, 13. Now I will leave you to gueſs at the ſenſations of Prodigalis; thus fixed in the preſence of God, with all his ſins in the light of God's countenance, covered with guilt and filth, Satan at his right hand, and deſtruction at his left.

Ahimaaz. A deplorable ſtate indeed; but this is not the caſe with all ſinners.

Cushi. There is not an unconverted ſoul in the world, as the Lord liveth, but what is in this ſtate, whether he know it or not; and this he will find in a dying hour,—his ſins will ſtare him

him in the face,—deſtroying death will appear at his left hand, and Satan at his right, if he die out of CHRIST; and as ſure as death cuts him off in his ſin, ſo ſure Satan ſeizes the prey, he is *delivered up to the tormentor*, and has a diſtant view of the burning throne of GOD—*Then ſhall the ſpirit return to God who gave it*; and receive the ſentence, *Depart from me*; *I know ye not*.

Prodigalis being thus arraigned at the bar, with his accuſer at his right hand, and his executioner on his left, his judgment proceeded: there appeared a man under the burning light, that took out a ſort of poſt-bag, in which were the indictments of Prodigalis—*His tranſgreſſions were ſealed up in that bag, God had ſewed up his iniquity*, Job xiv. 17. And now the bag was brought forth, and unſealed—*And lo the roll of a book was found therein*; *and it was ſpread before him*; *and it was written within and without*; *and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe*, Ezek. ii. 9, 10.

AHIMAAZ. Pray who was clerk of the peace? Who was he that read the indictment?

CUSHI. Moſes reads the indictments, enrolls the acts, and draws the proceſs; but a man whoſe name is Conſcience appeared as clerk of the aſſize, and produced many things that had been done in various circuits; he was clerk of the crown alſo, for he had framed and recorded many indictments, which were all now produced.

AHIMAAZ. Pray what was his indictment? Who had impeached him?

CUSHI. There were ſeveral indictments againſt him. Firſt, he was accuſed of tranſgreſſing all the laws of his ſovereign; ſecondly, of private conſpiracy and rebellion againſt the king's perſon; thirdly, of high treaſon; and, fourthly, of murder, &c. as ſhall be ſhewed in the proceſs.—Firſt the roll of lamentation, mourning, and woe, was read in the order following: Thou art indicted, by the name of Prodigalis, for adhering to an unlawful ſovereign, for *ſin had reigned in his heart*, Rom. v. 21.—Thou haſt been diſloyal to the king, and haſt ſet up another in oppoſition to him—*he had ſet up an idol in his heart*, Ezek. xiv. 4.—Thou haſt opened thy mouth againſt his majeſty, and ſpoken lightly and vainly of his name and perſon.—Thou haſt profaned the days of reſt—the jubilee days—faſt days—and all the days of feſtivity.—Thou art charged with diſobedience to thy progenitors, and with the dreadful crime of murder;—thou haſt hated thy brother for his loyalty, which is murder conceived in the heart.—Thou art charged with adultery, and with theft; with ſpeaking falſely of thy neighbour, and coveting his property after thou hadſt waſted thine own. What ſayeſt thou to theſe indictments? Art thou guilty, or not?

AHIMAAZ. Pray what did the poor ſoul ſay? I have ſuch a feeling for him, I long to hear his

deliverance; for I fancy myſelf at the very bar. Did he plead not guilty?

Cushi. No, he could not do that, for the judge himſelf was a *ſwift witneſs againſt him*, as it is written, *And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the ſorcerers, the adulterers, and the falſe ſwearers*, Mal. iii. 5. Beſides, Conſcience, who was clerk of the crown, had framed and recorded many indictments againſt him; for he had been privately arraigned and found guilty ſeveral times before; therefore to plead innocent would have been giving the lie both to God and conſcience; and who againſt theſe can be heard?

He neither pleaded guilty nor innocent; he held his hands before his face to hide his fallen countenance, and trembled at every joint; for he had not (to his knowledge) one friend in all the court. The indictment was read, wherein he was charged with private conſpiracy and rebellion; this he could not deny, for the accuſer who ſtood at his right hand was the very enemy that drew him into that conſpiracy; as it is recorded—*that they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will*, 2 Tim. ii. 26.

Ahimaaz. Why ſure the curſed wretch did not drag the poor ſoul into rebellion, and then turn the king's evidence, did he?

Cushi. He is one that can turn any way but the right. He will ſwear and lie too for no-

 thing;

thing; howbeit the king ſtands in no need of his evidence, nor does he get his own neck out of the halter by all his turning. The rebellion that the priſoner was charged with was, that he had not only oppoſed the univerſal monarch himſelf, but that he had endeavoured to put the loyaliſts to ſhame—expoſe their obedience to contempt—and perſecute them for their cloſe attachment to the crown and dignity of their rightful ſovereign. His treaſon conſiſted in ſpeaking evil of the king; yea, he had even gone ſo far in his deſperate rebellion, as to give him the lie to his face—*for he that believes not has made him a liar*, 1 John v. 10.

When the poor priſoner looked up and ſaw Moſes his accuſer before him juſt under the judgment ſeat, and Juſtice with his drawn ſword cloſe by him; Satan ſtanding at his right hand, and Death at his left, his *ſpirit would have failed from before his judge, and the ſoul that God had made*, Iſaiah lvii. 16. had he not been upheld by a divine power; for he knew that as ſoon as Moſes had finiſhed his accuſation, the ſentence muſt be paſſed; Juſtice would order the executioner to cut him down, and deliver the rebel to the tormentor, and then woe to him for ever. What to do he knew not; plead innocent he dared not; he was drove to his wits end; his hair ſtood erect upon his head, and his heart was ſo pregnant with grief and horror, that he feared it would burſt in his body. The burden of his ſin, and the fear of death, overwhelmed him;

for he knew that in the ſight of his Judge *no fleſh living could ever be juſtified.*

Moſes began his accuſation thus: Thou haſt been a ſtubborn ſtiff-necked rebel ever ſince I knew thee. I had ſet before thee *life and death*, and told thee to chooſe life that it might be well with thee, and that thou mighteſt prolong thy days; but thou haſt been one void of counſel, a perverſe one, in whom is no faith. I told thee that thou ſhouldeſt find no reſt for the ſoles of thy feet—that thy life ſhould hang in doubt before thee—and that thou ſhouldeſt have no aſſurance of thy life; that the heavens ſhould be iron over thy head, and the earth braſs beneath thy feet; and that in the morning thou ſhould ſay, Would GOD it were night; and at night, Would GOD it were morning;—all theſe things thou knoweſt ſtand on record in my law. But thou haſt caſt all my words behind thy back, therefore thou muſt now expect the conſequences—*Curſed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them*, Deut. xxvii. 26. Doſt thou think that the law ſhall be made void for thee? Shall an eternal act be repealed to ſcreen a rebel? Shall a divine ſentence be revoked? Shall divine truth ſtand in deriſion, or be expoſed to ſcorn and contempt, or charged with falſhood to ſave an enemy? And ſhall Immutability itſelf appear to change and waver, that a traitor may ſtand in judgment? Nay, divine veracity hath affirmed that *it is eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs away, than for one tittle of the law to fail*, Luke xvi. 17.

Now Juſtice began to vindicate truth and law; I have ſaid, *that the ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die*, Exod. xviii. 4. My *ſword ſhall be bathed in heaven, and come down on Idumea, the people of my curſe, to judgment*, Iſa. xxxiv. 5. *Cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites*, Matt. xxiv. 51. *Cut it down* [I ſay], *why cumbereth it the ground?* Luke xiii. 7. Now his right-hand accuſer laid about him, as if he had almoſt *ſwallowed him up alive as the grave; and whole as they that go down to the pit*, Prov. i. 12. To be ſhort, the poor priſoner could not perſuade himſelf but that the execution was actually begun, and that he was really ſinking into hell itſelf.

Ahimaaz. I never heard of ſo dreadful a trial in my life before; do relate his deliverance,—for really I feel as if I was under the ſentence myſelf. I cannot help weeping over him; I find my very ſoul drawn out in love and pity toward him. I have ſuch a love to him, and ſuch a ſenſe of his ſufferings, that I could give all that I have in the world to have a ſight of him.

Cushi. While Moſes was thus accuſing, Juſtice threatening, and Prodigalis ſinking as he thought into the belly of hell, he lifted up his right hand and gave ſuch a ſmite upon his breaſt as if he would have beaten the breath out of his body, and cried out, *God be merciful to me a ſinner.* This was done with ſuch fervour, and with ſuch a ſtrong voice, that it ſilenced every one in the court, except the devil, whoſe curſed breath

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is never ſpent. As for Moſes, he had no more to ſay; for he knew that GOD *would be gracious to whom he would be gracious, and that he would ſhew mercy to whom he would ſhew mercy*, Exod. xxxiii. 19.

Moſes never accuſes any man that pleads or calls for mercy; nor did Juſtice proceed againſt this petition of Prodigalis; for juſtice is in perfect harmony with mercy; they *have met together, and kiſſed each other long ago*, Pſal. lxxxv. 10. Nor is Juſtice againſt the poor ſinner that pleads for mercy in mercy's channel; far from it; for he ſays to ſuch, I am *faithful and juſt to forgive ſins, and to cleanſe from all unrighteouſneſs*, 1 John i. 9.

Moſes inſiſted on perfect obedience, *and he accuſed for diſobedience*, John v. 45. Juſtice called for death on the tranſgreſſor, and death ſtood ready to execute the ſentence, and Satan to torment the executed.

The priſoner having recovered himſelf a little, repeated his old petition (being determined to diſcharge the arrow that would fly), *God be merciful to me a ſinner*. As ſoon as he had ended this lamentable cry, there came a perſon to him of ſingular beauty, *fairer* [by far] *than any of the children of men*, Pſalm xlv. 2. and ſaid, *Where are thoſe thine accuſers? Hath no man condemned thee?* John viii. 10. The priſoner could not ſpeak, for *his words were ſwallowed up*, Job vi. 3. He ſtill ſtuck to his text, and a third time repeated the old cry, if poſſible louder than ever, *God be merciful*

ciful to me a ſinner! The glorious perſon looked very hard, both at Moſes and at Juſtice; *and he anſwered and ſpake to thoſe,* [for they ſtill] *ſtood before him, ſaying,* [I] *take away the filthy garments from him. And unto the* [priſoner] *he ſaid, I have cauſed thine iniquity to paſs from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment,* Zech. iii. 4. And true enough he did; for he took him and waſhed him in the midſt of the court, ſaying, *For I will cleanſe their blood that I have not cleanſed; for* [I] *the Lord dwell in Zion,* Joel iii. 21. And to the poor ſoul he ſaid, *If I waſh thee not thou haſt no part with me,* John xiii. 8.

Juſtice ſeeing this, ſtepped up, and ſtood cloſe by the Mediator, and acquieſced in the Saviour's wonderful act of clemency, ſaying, *I am faithful and juſt to forgive thee thy ſins, and to cleanſe thee from all unrighteouſneſs,* 1 John i. 9. But Moſes ſtill kept looking about for a covering; for his law ſays, *And it ſhall be our righteouſneſs, if we obſerve to do all theſe commandments before the* LORD *our* GOD, *as he hath commanded us,* Deut. vi. 25.

Waſhing, under the ceremonial law, was not ſufficient to recommend a ſoul to GOD; a perfect obedience to the moral law was required. Nor had a ſinner any call for a ceremonial cleanſing, if he had never tranſgreſſed the moral precept. The Saviour obeyed the law perfectly, and therefore wanted no ſacrifice for himſelf; he offered himſelf, but it was for us.

The

The LORD JESUS ſeeing Moſes ſo bent upon a righteouſneſs to juſtify the ſinner, as well as a purification, the Mediator anſwered and ſaid, I have *magnified the law and made it honourable*, Iſa. xlii. 21. My *obedience is ſufficient to juſtify* [him] *and many* [more], Rom. v. 19. And to the priſoner he ſaid, Behold, *I bring near my righteouſneſs*, Iſa. xlvi. 13. and *I will clothe thee from head to foot* [with it], Iſa. lxi. 10. And *when Moſes heard that he was content*, Lev. x. 20.

Then ſaid the Mediator, *Let them ſet a fair mitre upon his head; ſo they ſet a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the* LORD *ſtood by*, Zech. iii. 5.

As ſoon as the Mediator had waſhed him, clothed him with his robe, and ſet the fair mitre upon his head, then he took the poor ſinner by the neck, and held him forth before the devil; *And the* LORD *ſaid unto Satan, The* LORD *rebuke thee, O Satan! even the* LORD *that hath choſen Jeruſalem rebuke thee: Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* Zech. iii. 2.

As ſoon as the devil ſaw that, he vaniſhed like *lightning falling from heaven*, Luke x. 18. And there was heard a ſhout and a loud voice even from the celeſtial regions, ſaying, *Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our* GOD, *and the power of his* CHRIST; *for the accuſer of our brethren is caſt down, which accuſed them before our* GOD *day and night; and* [Prodigalis] *has overcome him by the blood of the* LAMB. *Therefore rejoice ye heavens,*

heavens, and ye that dwell in them, Rev. xii. 10, 11, 12.

AHIMAAZ. My very ſoul is fired with love to the dear Redeemer; well may he be called our *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption,* 1 Cor. i. 30. My ſoul is as if it was juſt delivered; ſurely I feel the bleſſed effects of that poor ſinner's juſtification: O what a friend is the Saviour to the poor! Pray go on with the account.

CUSHI. As ſoon as the Mediator had waſhed, clothed, and crowned the poor priſoner, and had rebuked Satan the accuſer, he then appeared at the right hand of Prodigalis, and ſtood as an Advocate, in the very place where Satan the accuſer had ſtood. Thus the Advocate diſplaced the devil. This made the priſoner cry out, *I will praiſe the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praiſe him among the multitude. For he ſhall ſtand at the right hand of the poor, to ſave him from thoſe that condemn his ſoul,* Pſalm cix. 30, 31.

AHIMAAZ. Pray what ſaid *the great and terrible name* to this? he that *ſpake out of the thick darkneſs,* Deut. v. 22. you know he is *a conſuming fire,* Heb. xii. 29.

CUSHI. Why, the Mediator took Prodigalis in his right hand, and led him up, even before that great and terrible name, as you call it; he led him up to him (I ſay), in his crown and robe, as he was, and ſaid to his Father, *Behold me, and* [one of] *the children which thou haſt given me,* Heb. ii. 13.

ii. 13. and that great and terrible name appeared one of the moſt compaſſionate and tender Fathers that ever mortal heard of; for he roſe up from his ſeat, *and ran to him, and fell on his neck and kiſſed him*, Luke xv. 20. *and ſaid, This my ſon was dead and is alive again, he was loſt and is found*, ver. 24. The poor ſoul cried aloud, ſeeing himſelf ſo unworthy of adopting grace, and ſaid, *Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and in thy ſight, and am not worthy to be called thy ſon*, ver. 21. and lift up his voice and wept aloud. But the Father wiped his blubbered cheeks, ſaying, *And* God *ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying*, Rev. xxi. 4. Then ſaid the Mediator to Prodigalis, *Be not afraid*, Mark v. 26. *for the Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me*, John xvi. 27.

The Father ſeemed to take particular notice of the robe that the Mediator had put upon poor Prodigalis, *and ſmelled the ſmell of his raiment, and bleſſed him, and ſaid, See, the ſmell of my ſon is as the ſmell of a field which* [I] *the* Lord *have bleſſed. Therefore* [I will give thee] *of the dew of heaven, and the fatneſs of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people ſerve thee, and* [ſinful] *nations bow down to thee: be* Lord *over thy* [fleſhly] *brethren, and let thy mother's* [baſe-born] *ſons bow down to thee: curſed be every one that curſeth thee, and bleſſed be he that bleſſeth thee*, Gen. xxvii. 27, 28, 29.

AHIMAAZ. Why, the Father ſeemed as loving to him as the Mediator himſelf, who *was fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bone*, Eph. v. 30. I cannot think how the poor ſoul could bear up under ſuch unparalleled kindneſs and mercy. Aſtoniſhing love! But the Son's robe is pleaſing to the Father; for he has ever pronounced a bleſſing on them *whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered* with that robe; and has promiſed never to impute ſin to ſuch again, nor charge their ſpirit with guile, Pſalm xxxii. 1, 2.

CUSHI. Indeed the Father ſeemed as fond of adorning him as the Mediator himſelf; for he did not think poor Prodigalis was fine enough. Therefore he ſaid, *Put a ring on his finger, and ſhoes on his feet, and let us be merry*, Luke xv. 22, 23. He ordered likewiſe all the hoſts of heaven to acquieſce in this his ſovereign will; and ſaid, *There ſhould be joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons* [now in glory] *that never need repentance*, Luke xv. 7. Nor was the Father of eternity himſelf ſilent when the celeſtial triumphs began: ſo far from it, that the ALMIGHTY's voice was as plainly heard in the anthem as the muſic and melody of all the reſt. And indeed it muſt be ſo to fulfil the Scriptures, which cannot be broken: *The* LORD *thy* GOD *in the midſt of thee is mighty: he will ſave; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will reſt in his love,* HE WILL JOY OVER THEE WITH SINGING, Zeph. iii. 17.

After

After the Father had kiſſed him, bleſſed him, ordered the ring on his finger, and the ſhoes on his feet, and had joined in the anthem at the reception of him, becauſe he *had received him ſafe and ſound*; the Saviour put one of the hands of Prodigalis into the hand of his heavenly Father, and held the other hand faſt himſelf; then ſaid the bleſſed Saviour to poor Prodigalis, *None ſhall pluck* [thee] *out of my hand*; *my Father is greater than all, and none is able to pluck* [thee] *out of my Father's hands*, John x. 28, 29. The Father having kiſſed him, he pointed him to his beloved Son, ſaying, *Go*; *kiſs the Son*; *bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him*, Pſalm ii. 12. And to his own Son he ſaid, *It is my will that not one of theſe* [poor] *little ones ſhould periſh*, Matt. xviii. 14. but that thou *raiſe them up at the laſt day*, John vi. 39. Thus poor Prodigalis, the ſelf-condemned ſinner, was juſtified; and he that was *far off by wicked works, was made nigh by the blood of* CHRIST. And the enemy was reconciled to GOD by the death of his dear Son.

AHIMAAZ. You have given me a ſweet account of the arraignment and juſtification of that poor ſinner; of his glorious deliverance; and of the rebuke that Satan met with. But Deſtruction, the executioner, that ſtood at his left hand, you ſay nothing about; pray what became of him? for of all the enemies that poor fallen mortals are expoſed to, he is none of the leaſt: indeed he is one of the moſt formidable; for if he receives a commiſſion

commiſſion to execute his office on the ſelf-condemned criminal, he is gone for ever; he has no more part in any good thing that is done under the ſun. The fatal die is caſt, and the departed ſoul is expoſed to every ſhaft that flies beyond the tomb. Bleſſed is that man that is *delivered from the arrow that flieth by day; he ſhall not be afraid of the terrors of* [endleſs] *night*; being cleanſed from the ſpiritual *peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs*; he is alſo *delivered from the deſtruction that waſteth at* [the] *noon* [of goſpel] *day*, Pſalm xci. 5, 6.

Cushi. Why, the Mediator ſaid to Deſtruction, I came *to deliver them who through the fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage*, Heb. ii. 15. and as ſoon as he had ſaid this, Prodigalis was not in the leaſt afraid of him, but rather wiſhed him to do his office, being perſuaded that *all things were his, whether life or death*, 1 Cor. iii. 22. For as the ſting of death was gone out of his conſcience, he was not afraid of a phantom; for death is no more without his ſting than a ſerpent is without his tooth. It is guilt that makes death formidable; without this he is a mere ſhadow without a ſubſtance, Pſalm xxiii. 4. Indeed, poor Prodigalis triumphed over him, ſaying, *O death, where is thy ſting! O grave, where is thy victory! The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to* God *which giveth us the victory through our* Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. This is no more than the fulfilment

filment of a glorious promiſe made by the dear Redeemer, *I will ranſom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: oh death, I will be thy plague! oh grave, I will be thy deſtruction! repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes,* Hoſea xiii. 14.

AHIMAAZ. I am wonderfully inſtructed; my very bowels yearn over the Father of all mercies, and the GOD of all comfort, for diſcovering ſuch bowels of mercy to poor returning ſinners, who have wantonly abuſed his name, and ignorantly rebelled againſt the only friend they have in heaven or earth. Beſides, my brother, we know GOD is ſelf-complete,—happy, and eternally happy in his own perfections; our praiſes or our preſence in heaven can never add to divine felicity; nor can all the horrors of the damned diſcompoſe the Moſt High, diſquiet his happineſs, or in the leaſt diminiſh his pleaſure.

This being the real caſe, GOD's endearing characters, and unexpected condeſcenſion, when diſplayed, is the moſt affecting ſcene that can be exhibited upon a human ſpirit.

CUSHI. True, my brother; and if poor ſouls, who are brought to hope in the Saviour, did but conſider the ALMIGHTY in thoſe relative ties, and covenant characters, that (as a reconciled GOD and Father) he ſtands in to them, there would not be that ſervile diſpoſition, that ſlaviſh fear that is in too many of them; nor that mercenary ſervice that is performed by them, which is not

at all to the honour of their benign Parent, nor to the honour or happineſs of themſelves; who are called a free and royal houſhold; and their dignity, their liberty, their maintenance, their crown royal, and their enjoyment of it, is eternally ſecured, and that by their own Father; whoſe wiſdom none can baffle, whoſe ſchemes none can fruſtrate, whoſe promiſe can never fail, and whoſe power cannot be reſiſted.

AHIMAAZ. Very true; but the ALMIGHTY does not give to all his children ſo conſpicuous a deliverance as he did to Prodigalis: nor do I believe that all are juſtified in ſuch a manner. I believe myſelf to be juſtified by faith in the Saviour; but I was not tried like him, nor delivered with all that explicit form that you have deſcribed.

CUSHI. But you was; and I will be bold to ſay, that if you was to go to the weakeſt babe in faith, and aſk him, if he was not awed by the fear of death before hope ſprung up in his breaſt; he would tell you, Yes. Aſk him, if evil thoughts were not ſuggeſted to his mind; and he would tell you, They were:—here is Satan the accuſer, and death the executioner. Aſk him, further, if the corruptions of his heart and his evil tempers were not diſcovered, and ſtirred up more than uſual:—here is the eye of GOD;—*Whatſoever maketh manifeſt is light*, Eph. v. 13. Aſk him if the law of GOD, when he read it, and his own conſcience, when he examined it, did not accuſe him:—if ſo, there is the clerk of the peace, the clerk

clerk of the crown, and Moſes the accuſer. And I will be bold to affirm that he never got rid of one of theſe accuſers nor accuſations but by faith in the name of JESUS. Theſe are the ſenſible effects of the trial, though they may not be able for the want of light and judgment to deſcribe it.

AHIMAAZ. Indeed, my friend, I can go ſtep by ſtep with your account of the ſenſations of Prodigalis; but to ſave my life I could not deſcribe my arraignment nor juſtification in the manner that you have.

CUSHI. I know that the poor ſinner is taken to taſk for all his tranſgreſſions; they occur to his mind, one after another, as he is able to ſtand the indictments: nor are the thoughts of his heart neglected in the divine proceſs; but when GOD *maketh inquiſition for blood, he remembereth them, he forgetteth not the cry of the humble,* Pſalm IX. 12.

And if any thing be not brought forth at the firſt arraignment, the poor ſinner, when he has tranſgreſſed, goes to the bar again, *and is rejudged and chaſtened of the* LORD, *that he may not be condemned with the world,* 1 Cor. xi. 32. How often is a real believer cited to the bar, or obliged to cite himſelf, for an evil thought, or an haſty expreſſion, becauſe his quickened ſoul is ſuſceptible of remorſe; when the impenitent ſinner ſhall hardly feel a check for all his abominable crimes, becauſe he is dead: how-

ever, the former has an advocate, but the latter knows of none.

Ahimaaz. I find that I agree with you in the feeling ſenſe of the power, though I have not light enough to ſee eye to eye; but the *kingdom of* God *is not in word but in power*. I am ſorry that I ſo often break in upon your converſation, and eſpecially in a contradictory way; but your candour will excuſe my intruſion. I am obliged, when I have raiſed all my objection, to go with the force of your arguments; for when you back your aſſertions with the word of God, both my conſcience and experience carries me into your channel. I would wiſh to hear how the poor ſoul found himſelf after his juſtification by faith, and reconciliation with God. I dare ſay he thought that heaven itſelf was come down into his heart.

Cushi. After he had received the ſentence of juſtification, and the benediction of the Father and the Son (for they both bleſſed him), he was led into a lonely avenue, and had a true and humbling ſight of the croſs, that he might know how his juſtification was procured by his Surety: and likewiſe he was left to contemplate there which way it was that law and juſtice got ſatisfaction, *that* God *might appear juſt* [to his law] *as well as the juſtifier of* [Prodigalis] *that believed in* Jesus, Rom. iii. 26. The poor man never had ſo humbling a viſion as this before; his ſoul was diſſolved at the ſight of the croſs: the ſingular clemency

clemency of his LORD, exhibited in the myſtery of his ſufferings, overwhelmed him with humility; his eyes flowed with tears of love; his heart diſcharged every ſtream of gratitude; and his tongue encompaſſed his LORD with thouſands of bleſſings and praiſes, till he might truly be ſaid to *inhabit the praiſes of* [that Iſraelite], Pſalm xxii. 3.

AHIMAAZ. I bleſs GOD I know by happy experience what the feelings of poor Prodigalis were: I have had a ſight of the croſs myſelf; and have felt the immortal love of him that *died the juſt for the unjuſt:* and I hope that the bleſſed impreſſion that it left on my ſoul will never be defaced by the love of creatures. Surely the impreſſion was divine; nature was paſſive under it, and happy in it; nor does the ſoul ever deſire to loſe the ſenſe of it. But this is deemed mere folly and enthuſiaſm by the unenlightened part of mankind.

CUSHI. It is ſuch enthuſiaſm that every believer can give ſome reaſonable account of, agreeable to divine revelation: whereas, on the other hand, if the greateſt man of letters—one of the brighteſt parts and greateſt ingenuity in a carnal ſtate—was to attempt to mimic this power, an infant of days in grace would be able to detect the impoſtor. It is one of the *ſecrets that is with the righteous*; and all other ſecrets eſſential to ſalvation are included in it.

This I have often obſerved, that when a letter-learned Atheiſt has took pen in hand againſt a treatiſe of divinity, he has acted juſt as an ignorant bully would do with a reaſonable man, diſcharged the vulgar ſpleen of his heart at the book, though never able to overthrow or diſprove one truth contained in it, with either ſenſe or reaſon on his ſide: ſo that his bolt has only ſerved to diſcloſe the rebellion of his heart, and betray his ignorance of his Maker.

AHIMAAZ. If GOD hides his myſteries from the wiſe and prudent, they can do but little with them. No man can counterfeit a thing that he has no idea of; nor can he diſprove what he doth not underſtand. If the MESSIAH hides his myſteries from a man, he has no knowledge of them; therefore he can never counterfeit them, nor diſprove them. Such a man may be counted wiſe while he keeps ſilence; *even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wiſe; and he that ſhutteth his lips is eſteemed a man of underſtanding*, Prov. xvii. 28. *Wiſdom is too high for him*, Prov. xxiv. 7. therefore if he meddle with it, *he layeth open his folly*, Prov. xiii. 16.

But do give me a further account of Prodigalis; for it is the power of religion that warms the heart, as ſpeaketh the Pſalmiſt, *They ſhall ſpeak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the ſons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majeſty of his kingdom*, Pſalm cxlv. 11, 12.

CUSHI.

CUSHI. After Prodigalis had been indulged with a ſaving view of the croſs, he lived ſome time in that open viſion, until his ſoul was ſo meekened and humbled under that affecting ſcene of tragedy, that he died to all earthly comforts and earthly things. The charms of his wife, the pleaſures that he had taken in his children, the pleaſures of company, the bleſſings of health, the bleſſings of ſleep, and the bleſſings of food, were all inſipid and unſavory to him. Infinite fullneſs had entertained him with ſuch divine ſatisfaction, that there was no room for a ſecond courſe; GOD was all in all. And though GOD has *made every thing beautiful in its ſeaſon*, yet there was but one object beautiful and ſeaſonable to him.

For many months he lived in this open viſion, and ſpent his time in the pleaſing element of ſilent ſolitude, until he pined after heaven, as the infant juſt weaned doth after its mother's breaſt. He was like the Pſalmiſt; *As the hart panteth after the water brook, ſo panted his ſoul after* GOD, Pſalm xlii. 1.

AHIMAAZ. This is the bleſſed ſtate of a reſtored ſoul; and he can do no leſs than love GOD with all his heart, with all his ſoul, with all his mind, and with all his ſtrength. The man ſees his own ſalvation ſo precious, and himſelf ſuch a debtor to grace, that the united efforts of every mental power are not ſufficient to expreſs the high obli-

gation that ſuch are under to GOD, nor the love and gratitude that is due to him.

CUSHI. Why, you talk like a ſound divine; that is a moſt gracious ſpeech, and a very true one. Howbeit, after Prodigalis had been long indulged with this viſion of the croſs, that began in time to grow dim in its luſtre, and to get more remote from view; and its appearing at a greater diſtance, cauſed the ſenſations thereof to abate in proportion: but the Saviour ſent him another Comforter, who gradually opened to his underſtanding the ſacred and profound myſteries of the Holy Trinity; and led him up to the eternal counſel of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the œconomy of man's ſalvation. Theſe things afforded him freſh entertainment: and no wonder; for ſuch aſtoniſhing and eſtabliſhing views led the poor ſoul into joys unutterable: ſo that he rejoiced as much in the reſurrection and glorification of the Son of GOD, as he had before mourned at the viſions of his unparalleled ſufferings and death. The bleſſed SPIRIT ſhined like the ſun on his underſtanding—revived his drooping heart—influenced his mind with life and peace—ſet his affections in a flame for GOD—and informed his judgment reſpecting thoſe things which are hid from the wiſe and prudent. In ſhort, he had a glimpſe of almoſt all the eſſential myſteries, Mark iv. 11. This kindled a becoming zeal within him, and made his heart overflow with

with *joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* Thus he was *waſhed in the regeneration, and renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, which was ſhed upon him abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour,* Tit. iii. 6. He *was a new creature indeed; old things were paſſed away, and all things became new,* 2 Cor. v. 17. his *fleſh ſeemed freſher than a child's, and he returned to the days of his youth,* Job xxxiii. 25. This made him deſire no longer to appear *as a candle under a buſhel, or under a bed, but he wiſhed to appear on a candleſtick, that others might ſee the light,* Matt. v. 15.

He began to ſpeak cheerfully of divine things to his wife, family, and friends—*the law of kindneſs was under his tongue*; his converſation was ſavoury and powerful, and his zeal and knowledge was accompanied with a public ſpirit. He became a lively companion to thoſe who had any reverence of their Maker—a warm reprover of the wicked—an informer of the miſled—a keen detector of errors—a ſound ſcriptorian—a ſon of conſolation to a wounded ſpirit, and a conſpicuous prevailer with GOD in prayer. The order of his family viſibly reflected the religion of his heart; he endeavoured to train his children up to uſeful learning; to make them dextrous at their pen—good accomptants—good grammarians—excellent readers—good geographers, &c. &c. and to inform their judgment in theſe things, as well as to load their minds with *great ſwelling words of vanity.* Theſe things, when

when accompanied with a becoming prudence, and good ſenſe, make perſons ſhine like ſtars in their own native country.

Prodigalis never ſuffered his daughters to learn to dance, to ſwell their breaſts, or to ſtretch their necks with the curſed air of wantonneſs. He knew by woeful experience the craft of the devil, and that he would uſe every effort to get at their hearts and deſtroy their ſouls, without his giving him a clue. Nor did his wife gad about with a dreſs *upward man* and *downward woman*, as if they were a kind of mermaids,—with a man's hat and wig and a woman's apron and petticoat—a dreſs becoming none but hermaphrodites. How odious does it look to ſee men imitate women, with a back to their coat after the faſhion of French ſtays, and bows of ribbon to their ſhoes, like miſſes in their teens; while the women wear not only the beaver and the wig, but the coat and waiſtcoat alſo:—*The woman ſhall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither ſhall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do ſo are abomination unto the* LORD *thy* GOD, Deut. xxii. 5. GOD has excluded the cottiſh man from his kingdom—*Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of* GOD, *neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate*, 1 Cor. vi. 9.

I uſed to wonder what could be the reaſon of ſo many divorces and elopements among our married nobility; but it is not to be ſo much wondered

wondered at, when we ſee ſo many act like the King of Babylon — dreſs the wife up for a ſhow, and call for others to admire her, until her heart is impriſoned to one of her admirers; then ſhe quits her huſband, and ſets her favourite to law with the injured man for a ſeparate maintenance; and if ſhe carries the ſuit, which is often the caſe, then ſhe keeps her humble ſervant at the expence of her injured huſband. One would think theſe were all Nicolatians, and that they were determined to have all things common. However, GOD *will certainly viſit for theſe things, and his ſoul will be avenged on ſuch a nation as this*, Jer. v. 9.

Prodigalis acted not ſo; he endeavoured to lead his family in that way where he was the moſt likely to meet with the bleſſing of his GOD. He uſed the means appointed, did his duty in his ſtation, and left the event to his GOD;—nor did his family like him the worſe for it; for they ſaw the hand of GOD ſo viſibly with him, that they feared him as his ſervant, and revered him as a tender and gracious father.

AHIMAAZ. The man that puts his truſt in GOD, will ſurely be defended and honoured by him; for he is a wall of fire round about them that fear him, and they will ſurely burn themſelves that attempt to oppoſe him; and, as you juſtly obſerve, GOD will avenge the violation of his laws;—matrimony is GOD's inſtitution, himſelf is concerned in it, and he will puniſh the

violators of it, as contemnors of him. But do proceed with your account of Prodigalis;—as for the baſe proceedings of the ungodly, they can afford us no entertainment, unleſs it be to ſet us to wondering at the diſcriminating grace of GOD, that has cauſed us to differ. I ſuppoſe that you look upon the glorious renewing of the poor prodigal to be his new birth, do you not?

CUSHI. Certainly I do. After Prodigalis *believed, he was ſealed with that holy ſpirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our inheritance*, Eph. i. 13. And born of GOD he certainly was, for every faculty of his ſoul was *renewed by the Holy Ghoſt*, Tit. iii. 5. and *that which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit*, as *that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh*, John iii. 6. He was enabled to believe in the Saviour to the ſalvation of his ſoul; and he is a *child of God by his faith*, Gal. iii. 26. His father received him graciouſly, and bleſſed him, which is a ſufficient proof of his being *predeſtinated to the adoption of ſons*, Eph. i. 5. Beſides, GOD the Father called him his ſon when he ſaid, *This my ſon was dead and is alive again, he was loſt and is found*; and becauſe he is a ſon, *God has ſent forth the ſpirit of his Son into his heart, crying Abba, father; wherefore he is no more a ſervant, but a ſon; and if a ſon, then an heir; an heir of God through Chriſt*, Gal. iv. 6, 7.

AHIMAAZ. Pray, my brother, ſhew me ſome ſcriptural criterions of a child of GOD; and as you ſay a ſon is an heir of GOD, and a joint heir with CHRIST, do explain them to me, for I have had

had many doubts, fears, and temptations about my intereſt in theſe things; though I believe, by the acceſs that I find to GOD in prayer, and by the familiarity that I am indulged with, that the whole of them are in my heart.

CUSHI, If I can be of any uſe to eſtabliſh and ſettle thy judgment, I ſhall be very willing to ſerve thee, according to my abilities; for I know that a gifted man is as much accountable to GOD for the huſbandry of his gift, as the wealthy man is for the huſbandry of his wealth; both are ſtewards, and both are accountable to their maſter; for GOD is the GOD of providence as well as of grace; and the father of creation, as well as of regeneration.

When GOD brings a poor penitent ſinner into his family, he makes him ſenſibly feel a reconciliation take place between GOD and him. His conſcience, which before was the ſeat of ſtrife, becomes the principality of divine peace. All the elect are pre-ordained to this *peace and reconciliation*, Iſa. xxvi. 12. hence they are called ſons of peace, even before peace be revealed to them; —*Into whatſoever houſe ye enter, firſt ſay, Peace be to this houſe; and if the ſon of peace be there, your peace ſhall reſt upon it; if not it ſhall return to you again*, Luke x. 5, 6. Secondly, ſuch are enabled to call GOD father, with the teſtimony of the word, the Holy Ghoſt, and conſcience on their ſide—*Thou ſhalt call me my father, and ſhalt not turn away from me*, Jer. iii. 19. this they are enabled

bled to do by the Spirit—*becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the ſpirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, father; wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon.* The poor prodigal claimed this privilege in the far country—*I will ariſe and go to my father*; and GOD owns him—*this is my ſon.* Thirdly, their ſonſhip is often made plain, and cleared up to them, by ſharp trials, and conſpicuous deliverances, by ſevere chaſtiſements, and ſtrong conſolations;—*My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he rebukes and chaſtens, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth; if ye are without chaſtiſements, of which all are partakers, then are ye baſtards and not ſons; for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not.*

Fourthly, their ſonſhip is made plain to them by the love of GOD that is ſhed abroad in their hearts; which encourages them to a holy freedom with GOD,—finding at times their doubts and fears removed; inſomuch that their faith ſeems ſettled. A ſenſe of love caſts out ſervile fear, and gives a man a holy boldneſs at a throne of grace; and faith works powerfully by love, for *he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God*, 1 John iv. 7. Thus he may prove his ſpiritual birth, and his ſaving knowledge of GOD, by the love that he feels to him; and though at times the young Chriſtian may find the love of GOD greatly abate, according to his feelings, ſo that he cannot rejoice as uſual, yet even then

then it may be perceived; becauſe nothing in this world will repair the loſs to him, nothing will fill the vacancy; his heart is ſtill breathing after God; and truth hath ſaid, that *where his heart is there is his treaſure*, Matt. vi. 21.

Fifthly, he finds a real love to God's family more than to all earthly friends and relatives, however near by blood. A divine tie is by far ſtronger than all the ties of nature; and when this is the caſe with a poor ſoul, 'tis a plain proof that his carnal enmity is ſlain, and that reconciliation has taken place by the Spirit;—John brings it in as a proof of divine life—*We know that we are paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren*, 1 John iii. 14.

Sixthly, his ſonſhip appears by the reverence and reſpect that he has for the word and worſhip of God. God's houſe is his Bethel; the promiſes are ſweet to him; bleſſed entertainment, and ſweet ſatisfaction, he often finds in them;—and as he finds life and comfort in the word, he may ſay, with the Pſalmiſt, *This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me*, Pſalm cxix. 50. It is common for an heir to love his inheritance, and ſo does the believer, who is an heir of promiſe, *Heb.* vi. 17.

Seventhly, if any part of God's word goes againſt the weak believer, ſo that it diſcovers his ſins, and wounds him in the tendereſt part, yet he will not flee from it; he comes to the glaſs that diſcovers his deformity, and ſeeks the very

ſword

ſword that wounds him; while the falſe heart ſhuns the rays of truth, and ſkulks into the gloomy ſhades of darkneſs, as beſt ſuiting his complexion; *they hate the light, nor will they come to it, leſt their deeds ſhould be reproved: But he that doth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds might be made manifeſt that they are wrought in God*, John iii. 21. This proves the believer to be a child of light, becauſe he loves it, comes to it, and ſeeks direction from it; *while ye have the light believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light*, John xii. 36. and as they are children of light, ſo they are heirs;—*heirs of God* (who is light), *and joint heirs with Jeſus Chriſt* (the true light), Romans viii. 17.

AHIMAAZ. Bleſſed be GOD, I have felt more or leſs the operation of all your ſcriptural criterions; and I ſee my ſonſhip as clear as the noon-day. But do give me a little account of the believers inheritance; for I am determined to keep your heart ſpringing, and your tongue going, if aſking queſtions will do it. But before you begin to deſcribe the believers inheritance, be ſo kind as to ſhew me whether a ſoul thus juſtified, and adopted into the family of GOD, be for ever delivered from condemnation:—Have patience with me, my brother, for poſſibly I never may be favoured with ſuch an opportunity again.

CUSHI. As ſoon as Prodigalis was cleanſed, enrobed, and crowned, you know that both law and juſtice were on his ſide. The holy law, and

ſin-

ſin-avenging juſtice, are thoſe that the guilty ſinner is afraid of. As for Moſes, he was content as ſoon as the Saviour put the robe on him; and he muſt be ſo, or elſe contradict his own law:—*Therefore by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified in God's ſight; for by the law is the knowledge of ſin. But now the righteouſneſs of God without the law is manifeſted, being witneſſed by the law and the prophets; even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, unto all and upon all them that believe,* Rom. iii. 20, 21, 22. Thus you ſee this righteouſneſs is *witneſſed by the law itſelf,* and from the mouth even of Moſes; for CHRIST is the *end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth: For Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law, that the man which doeth thoſe things ſhall live by them. But the righteouſneſs which is of faith* [Moſes] *ſpeaketh on this wiſe: Say not in thine heart, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven? that is, to bring Chriſt down from above; or, Who ſhall deſcend into the deep? that is, to bring Chriſt again from the dead: But what ſaith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation. For the ſcripture ſaith, whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed,* Rom. x. 4—11.

Thus Moſes preached up an imputed righteouſneſs; ſpeaks of the faith of it, and of the confeſſion of it, and bears witneſs to it; and if he diſapproves of the righteouſneſs of faith, he is againſt his own teſtimony, and is no longer worthy the name of a faithful ſervant, becauſe he finds fault of his LORD and maſter's righteouſneſs; but that be far from Moſes, for *is the law againſt the promiſe of God? God forbid*, Gal. iii. 21.

Moſes himſelf was not juſtified by works in the ſight of GOD, no more than we are; hence he is enrolled among the believers. We all know that Moſes killed the Egyptian, and that was enough to condemn him for ever by his own law; he had no other ſhelter from the avenging ſword of juſtice than the blood of CHRIST;—*Through faith* [Moſes] *kept the paſſover, and the ſprinkling of blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born ſhould touch them*, Heb. xi. 28. *By faith* [Moſes] *refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharoah's daughter; chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*, Heb. xi. 24, 25. *for he had reſpect unto the recompence of reward*, ver. 26. what reward was that? why the reward promiſed to Abraham—it could be no other. And did Moſes expect that reward by works? No, *for if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promiſe; but* GOD *gave it to Abraham by promiſe*, Gal. iii. 18. For the promiſe that Abraham ſhould be *the heir of the world, was not to him*

or

or to his ſeed through the law, but through the righteouſneſs of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect; becauſe the law worketh wrath. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace: to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed, Rom. iv. 13—16.

Thus you ſee we have made ſhift to bring even Moſes himſelf on our ſide of the queſtion, and we have done right; for it was not the legal works of Moſes that GOD commends, but his faith—*Moſes is faithful in my houſe.* And it was to the comfort of Moſes, as well as to us, that the LORD proclaimed his name before him—*the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth. Keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and ſin,* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

The way that Moſes found acceſs to GOD, was by faith in a Mediator; and to free grace revealed he found acceſs;—"And the LORD ſaid "unto Moſes, I will do this thing alſo that thou "haſt ſpoken: For thou haſt found grace in my "ſight, and I know thee by name," Exod. xxxiii. 17. Moſes is a ſworn enemy to *ſelf-righteouſneſs*, and preaches it down as much as CHRIST (his maſter) did in his days; and ſhews plainly that there is no entering into reſt *by* that, nor *for* that;—"Speak not thou in thine heart [here he con-"demns the thought of it] after that the LORD "thy GOD hath caſt them out from before thee, "ſaying, For my righteouſneſs the LORD hath

" brought me in to poſſeſs this land," Deut. ix. 4. Again, " Not for thy righteouſneſs, or " for the uprightneſs of thine heart, doſt thou " go to poſſeſs their land," ver. 5. And again, " Underſtand therefore, that the LORD thy GOD " giveth thee not this good land to poſſeſs it for " thy righteouſneſs; for thou art a ſtiff-necked " people," ver. 6. If the thought of meriting an earthly inheritance be condemned, what ſhall we ſay of them who not only *think*, but *boaſt* of meriting an eternal inheritance by their own righteouſneſs?

AHIMAAZ. GOD bleſs thee, my brother, thou haſt cleared that point up to my ſatisfaction. I ſee clearly that the righteouſneſs of CHRIST is that in which all the elect ſtand juſtified before GOD; it is witneſſed both by the law and the prophets; and as for the goſpel, that reveals no other:—*I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of* CHRIST, *for therein is the righteouſneſs of* GOD *revealed*, Rom. i. 17. And finding Moſes himſelf juſtified by the righteouſneſs of faith is a very comfortable thought to me. I ſee clearly that the law can never find fault with the Saviour's righteouſneſs, which is upon every believer; nor can it demand a better, nor condemn or curſe the man that has laid hold of it; for, as the ſcriptures ſay, *he that believeth is juſtified freely from all things*. O how ſafe is the poor ſinner under this robe! *bleſſed is the man whoſe iniquity is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered*. Yea the Saviour himſelf declares, *that he that believeth is paſſed*

form death unto life, and ſhall never come into condemnation; and Paul ſpeaks the ſame thing—*there is no condemnation to them that are in* CHRIST JESUS, Rom. viii. 1.

Thus I ſee that a ſoul ſtands juſt in the preſence of GOD, and in the light of the law, by faith in an imputed righteouſneſs; which Paul calls the obedience of the Saviour;—*Even ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous*, Rom. v. 19. yea, all the elect, *for in him ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory*, Iſa. xlv. 25. And we are for ever juſtified in the eye of Juſtice by faith in the Redeemer's blood; and conſequently juſtice can never demand of the believer the penal ſum, which is eternal death: Surely GOD hath *commended his love towards us in that, while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us. Much more then, being now juſtified by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him*, Rom. v. 8, 9. Thus I ſee I ſtand juſt before the law, by faith in the Saviour's obedience; and juſt in the ſevenfold eye of juſtice, by faith in the Saviour's blood; and, if ſo, *I am juſtified freely from all things, from which I could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes*, Acts xiii. 39. But I have heard people, and even divines, ſay, that our ſins will appear at the day of judgment, though we are pardoned; I wiſh you would rectify this matter. I am to you as the queen of Sheba was to Solomon—I *come to prove your wiſdom with hard queſtions*, 1 Kings x. 1.

CUSHI. For my part, I hope ever to go by what GOD ſays in his word, not by what men ſay; GOD ſays of every believer, that *he is complete in* CHRIST *the head*, Col. ii. 10. And *that he will not impute their treſpaſſes unto them*, 2 Cor. v. 19. That *he will caſt all their ſins into the ſea*, Micah vii. 19. That *he will remember them no more*, Jer. xxxi. 34. That *he ſees no ſin in Jacob, nor perverſeneſs in Iſrael*, Numb. xxiii. 21. And again, *in thoſe days, and in that time, ſaith the* LORD, *the iniquity of Iſrael ſhall be ſought for, and there ſhall be none; and the ſins of Judah, and they ſhall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reſerve*, Jer. l. 20. If I was to owe a man fifty pounds, and a ſurety ſtepped forth and paid the ſum, is not that debt cancelled? Is not the book diſcharged? And have I not got the bill and receipt in full of all demands in my pocket? And would it not be an unkind, and an unjuſt act in ſuch a creditor to be perpetually producing that old debt to my view, in the preſence of all company, would it not be contemptuous? And what credit could ſuch an one get by ſuch an action? Would not the book itſelf, being diſcharged, condemn his folly? And who but a novice would charge the Judge of all the earth with this? GOD bleſſes every poor ſinner that believes in his dear Son. Juſtice ſays, *I am faithful and juſt to forgive your ſin, and to cleanſe you from all unrighteouſneſs*.—Moſes is content.—And CHRIST ſays, *thou art all fair, there is no ſpot in thee*, Song iv. 7.

AHIMAAZ.

AHIMAAZ. But ſome ſay, it will be done to magnify the grace of GOD, and to ſhow how grace hath pardoned the greateſt of ſins.

CUSHI. Juſtice does not demand this, nor require it in all the Bible; beſides, it would admit of that which GOD excludes; it would have the appearance of upbraiding, which the word of GOD admits not, GOD *giveth liberally and upbraideth not*, James i. 5.

As juſtice does not require it; and as upbraiding is excluded, it can only be done to gratify devils and ſinners, which GOD will never do. I read, that the myſtery of iniquity is to be revealed to the righteous, but I never read that the myſteries of grace are to be revealed to the damned, *The manifold wiſdom of* GOD *is to be made known by the church to principalities and powers in heavenly places*, Eph. iii. 10. but to no other. A purged conſcience, the law of GOD written in the heart, and the teſtimony of GOD's Spirit, is a receipt in full of all the above-mentioned demands. And the poor ſinner, who has long laboured under a ſight and ſenſe of his ſins, frequently finds, that after GOD has removed his tranſgreſſions from his ſight, and purged his conſcience, that himſelf, even in a fit of unbelief, is not able ſo much as to bring his ſins freſh to his remembrance again; *they are blotted out as a cloud*, they are buried, nor can the devil or unbelief raiſe them up and bring them to life again. Not a ſingle ſin ſhall appear againſt the poor believer in the judgment day;

he ſhall riſe in his Saviour's image, *He ſhall be like him, for he ſhall ſee him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. *He ſhall have boldneſs in the day of judgment*, 1 John iv. 17. *He ſhall be preſented holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in God's ſight*, Col. i. 22. he *ſhall riſe firſt*, and appear in the Saviour's likeneſs, before the wicked be raiſed at all, 1 Theſ. iv. 16.

AHIMAAZ. I am coming again with another knot; for I am determined to bring every puzzling experience, and every puzzling providence forth; not a perplexing ſcripture, not an entanglement in my judgment, will I leave unriddled, if GOD will enable me to bring them forth, and you to explain them. But I dare ſay I ſhall think of twenty things after you are gone, that I ſhall now forget. But to the matter in hand; you know that Paul ſays we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of CHRIST;—"For we "ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of "CHRIST. For it is written, As I live, ſaith the "LORD, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every "tongue ſhall confeſs to GOD. So then every "one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to GOD," Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12. And again, "For we "muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of "CHRIST, that every one may receive the things "done in his body, according to that he hath "done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 10. Here firſt Paul declares that we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat; ſecondly, every knee muſt bow, and every tongue confeſs to GOD; thirdly,

thirdly, every one muſt give an account of himſelf to GOD; and laſtly, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether good or bad. Be as plain as poſſible on the ſubject; for if you leave but a vacancy as big as a button hole, unbelief will creep in, and drag a thouſand doubts at her heels.

CUSHI. Obſerve firſt the direction given by the lawgiver to the Judge, "If there be a controverſy between men, and they come unto "judgment, that the judges may judge them; "then they ſhall juſtify the righteous, and condemn the wicked," *Deut.* xxv. 1. And again, "If a man treſpaſs againſt his neighbour, and "an oath be laid upon him to cauſe him to "ſwear, and the oath come before thine altar in "this houſe; then hear thou in heaven, and do, "and judge thy ſervants, condemning the "wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and "juſtifying the righteous, to give him according "to his righteouſneſs," 1 *Kings* viii. 31, 32. Here you have the unalterable and eternal rule of judgment. In this *rule* you find two ſentences, and no more—*juſtification* and *condemnation*—thou ſhalt *condemn the wicked*—thou ſhalt *juſtify the righteous*. Now the effects or conſequences of theſe two ſentences are two alſo, a *bleſſing*, and a *curſe*, the law reveals no more, Deut. 28. read the whole chapter; the bleſſings are to thoſe that hearken to the voice of the LORD in the goſpel, and the curſes are to the legal ſelf-

righteous

righteous tribe, that truſt in their obedience to the law, to which they adhere for life, becauſe they cannot fulfil the whole of it;—*As many as are of the works of the law are under the curſe*, Gal. iii. 10. and, on the other hand, I have proved the believer to be under the bleſſing; *ſo then they which be of faith, are bleſſed with faithful Abraham*, Gal. iii. 9.

I have already ſhewed that the believer is juſtified, conſequently under the ſentence of juſtification; and the glorious effect of this is, that he is bleſſed; yea, he is bleſſed both by the law and the goſpel; GOD the Father bleſſes him; *Kiſs the Son leſt he be angry; bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him*, Pſalm ii. 12. He is bleſſed alſo of GOD the Saviour;—*Becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, Thomas, thou haſt believed; bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed*, John xx. 29. This bleſſing is likewiſe pronounced by the Holy Ghoſt;—*Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord; yea, ſaith the Spirit, for they reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them*, Rev. xiv. 13. This being the real caſe, the ſentence of juſtification, and the bleſſing annexed to it, follows the believer go where he will.

Having ſhewed you the rule of judgment, the ſentence and the bleſſing, I come now to ſpeak of the judgment ſeat. I have already proved, by the trial of Prodigalis, that the elect are arraigned and tried before the judgment ſeat in this world—that the light of GOD ſhines upon them;

them: that the commandment comes with power: that ſin revives, and the ſinner feeling the ſentence thereof dies: that law, conſcience, and Satan accuſe him; and that by faith he is juſtified, and paſſes from the ſentence of death to ſpiritual life by faith in the Son of GOD; as it is written, *I am the reſurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet ſhall he live; and he that liveth and believeth ſhall never die*, John xi. 25, 26. Thus you ſee the elect ſoul is arraigned and acquitted in this world by an act of grace.

Secondly, Every time he ſins againſt his Father and Redeemer, having the law of GOD and the rule of judgment written on his heart, he arraigns himſelf; this is his privilege, which if he neglects GOD does it: *If we would judge ourſelves we ſhould not be judged; but when we are chaſtened we are judged of the* LORD, *that we ſhould not be condemned with the world*, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

Thirdly, The believing ſoul may appear before the judgment ſeat of CHRIST as ſoon as it is ſevered from the body; *for the ſpirit returns to* GOD *that gave it*, Eccl. xii. 7. But ſuppoſing this be the caſe, the believing ſoul can receive nothing but the ſentence of juſtification, and the bleſſing annexed to it; *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the* LORD: but this is all ſuppoſition; for the Bible is ſilent about it to the beſt of my remembrance. It is ſaid of Lazarus, that *he was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom*, Luke xvi. 22.

and

and of the thief, that he ſhould be that day with the LORD in paradiſe, Luke xxiii. 43. But there is nothing ſaid of a trial between death and eternal glory. Yet doubtleſs the Saviour will preſent every believing ſoul before his Father at their arrival in heaven; but if he does, it will be *without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing:* and if ſo, it can be only to receive the Father's bleſſing; which will be no worſe than that which the poor ſoul met with on his repentance; namely, the *Father fell on his neck and kiſſed him*— and *rejoiced over him with ſinging.*

Fourthly, If we are all to appear before the judgment ſeat of CHRIST in the great day, as the apoſtle intimates, it will be only to be exalted to the right hand of the LORD: *And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left,* Matt. xxv. 33. And whatever account a believer is to give of himſelf to GOD, I believe the Saviour, as his only Advocate, will inſtruct him in it: *The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way,* Pſalm xxv. 9. And the chief account that he will have to give at that day will be an account of his unworthineſs, and to wonder at the grace of his incomparable Lord: *Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father* [mark the bleſſing here], *inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,* Matt. xxv. 34. Now mind the Saviour's proceſs, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirſty, and ye gave*

gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me, Matt. xxv. 35, 36. Now comes the account that the ſaints give of themſelves to GOD, which conſiſts of a public renunciation of all uſefulneſs to GOD, and of all dependance on merit: *Then ſhall the* RIGHTEOUS [mind the appellation] *anſwer him, ſaying,* LORD, *when ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirſty, and gave thee drink? when ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in priſon, and came unto thee?* Matt. xxv. 37, 38, 39. Thus the LORD juſtifies the righteous. Mind, he calls them *righteous*, which they could never be but by faith; for *he that believes not is condemned already*. Nor need we wonder at the LORD's putting encomiums on their works, for it was himſelf that *worked in them both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 13. The LORD had *wrought all their works in them*, Iſa. xxvi. 12. and he takes ſpecial notice of, and puts great encomiums upon them. But the righteous place no confidence in them, but renounce them, with an humble confeſſion of their unworthineſs: *And they were juſtified when they ſpoke, and cleared when they thus judged* [of themſelves], Pſalm v. 4. Thus you ſee, inſtead of the ſins of the juſt being expoſed, he brings forth every work of righteouſneſs; every fruit of faith and labour of love.

Thus

Thus I have anſwered three things in your queſtion. And I ſuppoſe Satan has been tempting thee to think that thou ſhalt be covered with ſhame and confuſion, either at death or at thy entrance into heaven; or at the great and terrible day; and his temptations have driven thee to make this earneſt enquiry; which is eaſily anſwered: for if there be in the word of GOD any thing relating to your enquiry which I have not brought forth, this text is ſufficient to anſwer it, either at an hour of death or at the day of judgment: *But Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in the* LORD *with an everlaſting ſalvation; ye ſhall not be aſhamed nor confounded world without end*, Iſa. xlv. 17.

The laſt part of your queſtion is, What is meant by *every man receiving according to the works done in the body, whether good or bad?* Here are two ſorts of works, *good* and *bad*; which Paul calls *the fruits of the* SPIRIT, and *the works of the fleſh. The fruit of the* SPIRIT *is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance; againſt ſuch there is no law*, Gal. v. 22, 23. *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Adultery, fornication, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, &c. &c. they that do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of* GOD, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

Thus you ſee the world is divided into two claſſes—*ſheep* and *goats*: and there are two ſorts of fruits—thoſe of the fleſh and thoſe of the SPIRIT:

SPIRIT: ſo likewiſe there are two covenants—one of grace, and the other of works: ſo alſo there are two ſentences—that of juſtification, and that of condemnation. The effect of juſtification is the bleſſing of GOD; and the effect of condemnation is the eternal curſe of GOD. A bleſſing and a curſe will cloſe the ſcene in the great day, and finally conclude the myſtery of GOD, Rev. x. 7.

As a *juſt* GOD *and a Saviour* the Judge will appear, and both claſſes will be *judged according to their works*: thoſe *that ſow to the fleſh ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption*; *and they that ſow to the Spirit ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting*, Gal. vi. 8. Thus every man ſhall *receive according to the things done in the body*; *according to that he hath done, whether good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10. If he be a believer, he is *bleſſed with faithful Abraham*; if he be a hoping ſoul, he ſhall not be *aſhamed of his hope*, but ſhall enjoy his expected inheritance, after his patience is tried in *looking for that bleſſed hope and the glorious appearing of the great* GOD *and our Saviour* JESUS CHRIST, Titus ii. 13.

O! how thankful ought a ſoul to be at the thought of the bleſſed LORD's appearing to *give a reward to his ſervants the prophets, and to all that fear his name, ſmall and great*, Rev. xi. 18. While on the other hand, he that dies in the fleſh is not one of the children of GOD; for he dies in his ſin, not in the Saviour, and dying in unbelief, he cannot enter the kingdom of GOD. For

my part, I know of no other ſorts of fruits or works but theſe two; and all the human race are bringing forth one or the other, according to the ſtate they are in, and the covenant they are under: nor is there any middle ſtate between them.

AHIMAAZ. For my part I am ſatisfied. *Bleſs the* LORD, *O my ſoul! and all that is within me bleſs his holy name. Bleſs the* LORD, *O my ſoul! and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diſeaſes; who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindneſs and tender mercies*, Pſalm ciii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Pray now go on with the deſcription of the bleſſed inheritance.

CUSHI. That is more than man or angel can do: but the book of GOD mentions it: GOD the Father hath promiſed to be our GOD: *At that time, ſaith the* LORD, *will I be the* GOD *of all the families of Iſrael, and they ſhall be my people*, Jer. xxxi. 1. This implies that GOD will be the portion of his people. *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy ſhield and thy exceeding great reward*, Gen. xv. 1. Thus the LORD *is the portion of his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance*, Deut. xxxii. 9. This glorious portion is to be known, and to be enjoyed by every believer at laſt. For he is, as the Scriptures witneſs, *an heir of* GOD, *and a joint heir with* CHRIST, Rom. viii. 17.

The bleſſed Saviour is the believer's portion alſo; GOD *ſo loved the world that he gave his only begotten*

begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him might not periſh but have everlaſting life. And again, I will keep him, and *give him for a covenant of the people,* Iſa. xlii. 6. The ſight of this made Paul *count all things but dung that he might win* CHRIST, Phil. iii. 8. whom he ſtyles *our life,* Col. iii. 4.

The Holy Ghoſt alſo is the portion of a believer; and an earneſt in his heart of all that he has in hope: *I will ſend you the promiſe of the Father.* And again; *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,* John xiv. 16.

Thus GOD; Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are the believer's everlaſting portion; and ſo he will find it in the end, when he comes *to be filled with all the fulneſs of* GOD. The whole of which is couched in theſe words: *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us. And the glory which thou gaveſt me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one,* John xvii. 21, 22, 23. Thus much for the portion.

But a dwelling-place is likewiſe included in ſcripture, as well as the enjoyment of GOD; for the inheritance of the ſaints conſiſts of a *place* as well as a glorious *ſtate: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myſelf, that where I am there ye may be alſo,* John xiv. 2, 3. *We, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens and a*

new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, 2 Peter iii. 13.

AHIMAAZ. This is an inheritance indeed! and bleſſed be GOD, it is in a meaſure enjoyed in this life; for when GOD ſheds abroad his love in our hearts, upon our receiving the atonement, the Holy Ghoſt fills us with joy and peace in believing; and we feel union and *fellowſhip with the Father and the Son*, 1 John i. 3. and enjoy the communications of the Holy Ghoſt. And I believe this is what Paul means when he ſays, *The grace of the* LORD JESUS CHRIST, *and the love of* GOD, *and the communion of the* HOLY GHOST *be with you all. Amen.* 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

CUSHI. It is Paul's meaning: and thus the bleſſed Trinity is experimentally and ſavingly known by every real believer in this world. The above inheritance is the inheritance promiſed to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob:—*I am thy ſhield, and thy exceeding great reward.* And it is ſaid that they *ſought a country* better than that which they left, *namely an heavenly one*, Heb. xi. 16.

AHIMAAZ. But pray, how is this inheritance ſecured to the heirs thereof? becauſe ſome people ſay that an heir of it may fall from grace—be diſinherited—and have *his portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone*; and if ſo, it had been better for them that they had never been made heirs.

CUSHI. Men who talk at that rate do not truſt in the grace of GOD; if you read their writings,

you

you will find that all their contention is for fleſhly works, and in works they truſt. And though the word *grace* be often brought in, yet it is only done as a deception to entangle others; hence ſuch are ſaid in ſcripture to *weave the ſpider's web*; that is, as the ſpider catcheth her prey in her web, ſo theſe interweave the word *grace* to catch ſouls for Satan in the net of works. And as many a fly ſettles on the web to reſt till it be devoured, ſo many ſouls ſettle on the Arminian web of grace and works, till they are entangled in the curſe of GOD and jaws of the devil. Such truſt in themſelves, not in GOD; and in their own dead works they place their hopes, inſtead of grace. But the inheritance is not promiſed to our works, nor ſecured by them: *For if the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promiſe; but* GOD *gave it to Abraham by promiſe*, Gal. iii. 18. If it were to be obtained by the works of the law it would be very uncertain; man might perform his part, and he might not: and if he did not perform the conditions, whatever ſuch conditions might be, then Infinite Wiſdom might be fruſtrated in his grand deſigns: therefore GOD has ſecured it in a way that the end is ſure to be accompliſhed; which will plainly appear, if you conſider the following negative and poſitive: *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect; becauſe the law worketh wrath; for*

where no law is there is no tranſgreſſion, Rom. iv. 15.

If the law worketh wrath—as it certainly does, becauſe it reveals GOD's wrath againſt ſin, and ſtirs up ſin againſt GOD; therefore the everlaſting inheritance cannot be obtained by works, nor can it be ſecured by the revelation of wrath: ſo far from it, that the ſtiffeſt legaliſt is the greateſt enemy to GOD, and the fartheſt from the kingdom of GOD. *The inheritance therefore is of faith* [which is GOD's gift], *that it might be* [beſtowed] *by grace* [not earned by works], *to the end the promiſe might* [not miſcarry, but] *be ſure to all the ſeed*, Rom. iv. 16.

Thus you ſee it is a bleſſing given us in CHRIST—promiſed to faith—ſecured by grace—and inſured to all the choſen ſeed. Thoſe perſons that you ſpeak of truſt altogether in their own works, and bring in the word *grace* as a trap to entangle others in the works of the law: and when their fleſhly works deceive and throw them down, as they did Peter, then they cry out, ſuch an one is fallen from grace: whereas ſuch always fight againſt grace. Thus the *painted ſepulchre* wears the garland—while he is permitted to deceive, and grace bears the ſcandal; when GOD fulfils his promiſe, *The prating fool ſhall fall*, Prov. x. 8.

AHIMAAZ. But there are many of theſe people who talk much of legal convictions and law terrors;

rors; and you know that Paul ſays, it is *experience that worketh hope.*

Cushi. The experience of pardon, peace, and reconciliation through Christ, and of regeneration by the Holy Ghoſt, worketh hope, but no other: the devils have experienced as many legal convictions, law terrors, motions of pride, workings of error, and as much deſperate rebellion, as all the human race together, and yet are as far from hope as enmity and eternity can ſet them. But the elect are predeſtinated: *In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will*, Eph. i. 11. Hence they are ſaid to have their names inrolled in the book of life; and the book is ſigned by three immutable witneſſes, and each witneſs has his name recorded in it, as appears by the Bible, and the Bible is a copy of the eternal counſel. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one*, 1 John v. 7. This book is *ſealed with ſeven ſeals*, Rev. v. 1. and delivered to the dear Redeemer, as God the Father's will; which will was to be obeyed by the Saviour, and made known to the choſen heirs. The conditions of it, ſuch as magnifying the law, and ſatisfying divine juſtice, were to be punctually performed, and the Father's plan fully executed by the Lord Christ; and ſo the inheritance was to be handed down to us by the Fa-

ther's will, and the Son's teſtament; of which will CHRIST is the Teſtator, the Executor, and the Mediator. *And for this cauſe he is the Mediator of the new teſtament, that by means of* [his] *death, for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were* [committed] *under the firſt teſtament* [or law], *they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance: for where a teſtament is, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator*, Heb. ix. 15, 16. Our bleſſed LORD ſhewed this when he inſtituted the LORD's ſupper; which prefigured the death of himſelf as the Teſtator, and the benefits of the teſtament, flowing to the innumerable multitude of choſen heirs. *For this is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins*, Matt. xxvi. 28.

AHIMAAZ. If this be the caſe, pray what became of the elect that went out of the world before the death of CHRIST? How could the eternal inheritance be conveyed to them? For the apoſtle ſays, *that a teſtament is of force after men are dead; otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all while the teſtator liveth*, Heb. ix. 17.

CUSHI. When the Saviour revealed the Father's will, and his own teſtament to Adam, ſaying, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and the ſerpent ſhall bruiſe the Saviour's heel*, his death was implied in the promiſe, and clearly ſhewn by the ſacrifice: and when Abel embraced the ſame promiſe by faith, his lamb prefigured the LORD's death; hence CHRIST is

ſaid

ſaid to die in the type; and is therefore called *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. So that the teſtament was of ſtrength as ſoon as the firſt promiſe was confirmed by a ſacrifice. And by thoſe legal ſacrifices *was the goſpel preached to the children of Iſrael*, Heb. iv. 1, 2, 3. and thoſe that rejected it, and truſted in the moral law, died in unbelief, and came ſhort of the inheritance; but thoſe who mixed faith with the word received the benefits of the teſtament; *they eat the ſpiritual meat, and drank the ſpiritual drink; they drank of the rock that followed them, and that rock was* CHRIST, 1 Cor. x. 4.

Moſes was very particular in pointing the Iſraelites to this bleſſed Teſtator and teſtament; for the tabernacle, which prefigured the church, the books likewiſe, and the people, were all ſprinkled, to ſhew that the church muſt be waſhed in the blood of the antetype; and that the teſtament muſt be confirmed by the blood of CHRIST, was ſhewed by ſprinkling the books; and that ſinners hearts muſt be ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, was ſhewed by ſprinkling the people. "For when Moſes had ſpoken every "precept to the people, according to the law (he "then pointed them to the blood of CHRIST), he "took the blood of calves, and of goats, with "water and ſcarlet wool and hyſſop, and "ſprinkled both the books and all the peo-"ple, ſaying, This is the blood of the teſtament "which GOD hath injoined unto you. More-

 "over,

" over, he ſprinkled likewiſe with blood both the " tabernacle and all the veſſels of the miniſtry. " And almoſt all things are by the law purged " with blood:" and all this to let the ſinner know, that " without ſhedding of blood is no re- " miſſion. It was therefore neceſſary that the " patterns of things in the heavens ſhould be pu- " rified with theſe, but the heavenly things " themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe;" (and what ſacrifices could they be but the body, blood, and ſoul of the Son of GOD?) Heb. ix. 19—23.

AHIMAAZ. I am fully ſatisfied with the account, and have a moſt comfortable view of the eternal inheritance: and bleſſed be GOD, I have had many ſweet foretaſtes of it; but Satan and my own unbelieving heart have often robbed me of my peace and comfort; and indeed at times I have been ſorely tempted to believe that I had neither part or lot in the matter. I ſee the teſtament is well confirmed, and the inheritance richly ſecured, being witneſſed by the eternal Three—ratified by the ſeven-fold ſeal of heaven—and enjoined to us, with all its ſaving benefits, by the blood of the Son of GOD. And I am fully perſuaded, that as the covenant is confirmed, *no man diſannulleth or addeth thereto*, Gal. iii. 15. But I have often doubted of my right and title, and whether my evidences are real or not.

CUSHI.

CUSHI. The eternal inheritance is handed down to us in an unconditional promiſe; and as GOD is called a believer's *portion*, ſo a believer is called *an heir of* GOD; and as the portion is held forth to us in a promiſe, ſo a believer is called *an heir of promiſe*, to whom the inheritance is confirmed by oath, Heb. vi. 17. And the teſtament alſo is called *the covenant of promiſe*, Eph. ii. 12.

That which gives a man a right and title to it, in the firſt place, is the free invitation and promiſe of GOD: "Whoſoever will, let him take "the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. there is the invitation: "and he that cometh to me I "will in no wiſe caſt out," John vi. 37. there is the promiſe to the coming heir.

Secondly, That which makes manifeſt our ſonſhip and heirſhip is the grace of faith; "For "ye are all the children of GOD by faith in "CHRIST JESUS," Gal. iii. 26. The appropriating act of faith is called a *receiving the promiſes*— and a *receiving* CHRIST JESUS *the* LORD, Col. ii. 6. both are the ſame; for if we receive the promiſes, the LORD is our portion, held forth in the promiſe; and when it is called a *receiving the* LORD, it is the ſame; "for all the promiſes are "in him yea and amen."

Believing on the name of CHRIST for life and ſalvation is called a *receiving of him*: "He came "to his own, but his own received him not; but "to as many as did receive him, to them gave he "power

"power [or privilege] to become the ſons of "GOD, even to them that believe on his name," John i. 12. Thus you ſee, that the privilege of ſonſhip and heirſhip is made manifeſt to us by faith; and faith ventures upon a divine grant.

Faith is likewiſe called a *ſubſtance*, and an *evidence*; "Now faith is the ſubſtance of things "hoped for, and the evidence of things not "ſeen," Heb. xi. 1. The things which a believer hopes for is the everlaſting enjoyment of his GOD in heaven; and as faith leads the mind to CHRIST, diſcovers CHRIST, lays hold of CHRIST, applies CHRIST, and gives CHRIST a dwelling in the heart by faith, Eph. iii. 17. it is called *the ſubſtance of things hoped for*; and as the witneſs of GOD's Spirit always attends it, and as it impreſſes the mind with the ſtrongeſt perſuaſion, and confirms and ratifies the truth of GOD to the believing ſoul, it is called *the evidence of things not ſeen*.

To be ſhort; faith is a divine perſuaſion, a humble confidence, a living fruit, an active grace, a diſcerning eye, an appropriating hand, and a moving foot. It is born of GOD; it is a divine ſubſtance, not a ſhadow; a living fruit of the Holy Ghoſt, not a barren aſſent; a comfortable aſſurance of all promiſed good, and not a deceiving fancy:—The juſt live by it; they overcome the world by it: the ſaints conflicts are called *faith's fight*, and their conqueſts are called *faith's victory*.

Faith

Faith is ſuch a powerful demonſtration to the believer's conſcience, that if he were under a ſtrong temptation, and violently beſet with unbelief, he dare not deliberately lay his hand on his heart, look his Maker in the face, and ſay he has neither part nor lot in his great ſalvation. Faith, *as an evidence of things not ſeen*, would gainſay every word of ſuch a raſh declaration, bring him in culpable of falſehood, and make him retract every word, even in the court of conſcience; and "who againſt faith and conſci-"ence can be heard infallible (ſays Milton); yet "many will preſume." The Pſalmiſt *ſaid in his heart all men are liars*, but *he that believes is not to make haſte*, nor ſuch haſty concluſions, *Iſa.* xxviii. 16. for faith comes in as a deliberate evidence of the truth, and gainſays the whole of it, as may be ſeen in the Pſalmiſt, *This is my infirmity.*

AHIMAAZ. But if GOD's grant give me a right, and if faith ſecures the inheritance to me, as the ſcriptures that you have quoted plainly prove, for they ſay *that God gave it to Abraham by promiſe*; and *if they that are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe of none effect*; and again, *for as many as are of faith are bleſſed with faithful Abraham*, this is plainly proved.—But then, why is a man ſaid to obtain a right by *doing?* "Bleſſed are they that *do* his command-"ments, that they may have right to the tree "of life, and may enter in through the gates "into the city," Rev. xxii. 14.

CUSHI. Take heed that you never expound one ſcripture to contradict another; if you do, you will make a jargon of the ſweeteſt harmony, charge divine rectitude with inconſiſtency, and the GOD of order with confuſion; *Wiſdom ſays, My mouth ſhall ſpeak truth, and wickedneſs is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteouſneſs; there is nothing froward or perverſe in them. They are all plain to him that underſtandeth, and right to them that find knowledge*, Prov. viii. 7, 8, 9. Now to ſhew you the meaning of the above text, firſt I will grant it you in your own ſenſe, and ſee how the current of ſcripture will harmonize with your opinion. We will ſuppoſe that a man in a ſtate of nature never had committed an actual tranſgreſſion; tho' GOD declares that *all have ſinned*, yet, for argument ſake, we will add to that man abſtinence from ſin——that he has obſerved every precept of the law externally, and lived exactly to that rule; yet GOD *has concluded all men in unbelief*, Rom. xi. 32. And what ſays GOD of his works—*whatſoever is not of faith is ſin*, Rom. xiv. 23. and again, *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. xi. 6. And what ſays the Judge himſelf of ſuch a man—*he that believeth not ſhall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16. What ſays GOD of his human righteouſneſs—*woe to them that cover with a covering, but not of my ſpirit, that they may add ſin to ſin*, Iſa. xxx. 1.

The grand points of the law are two, that a man love GOD with all his heart, and his neighbour

bour as himſelf;—*on theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* Thus you ſee all the law hangs on the hinge of love; but what ſays GOD of the natural man? why that the *carnal mind is enmity againſt God, that it is not ſubject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.* Therefore the Holy Ghoſt concludes, "that if a man "have all knowledge, and underſtands all myſ- "teries, and ſpeaks with the tongue of men and "angels; and if he give all his goods to feed "the poor, and his body to be burned, and hath "not charity, or love, it profiteth him nothing," 1 Cor. chap. 13. He is ſtill of the works of the law, and *as many as are of the works of the law are under the curſe;—for by the deeds of the law ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified.* Thus you ſee that your legal conſtruction upon that text runs foul of half the word of GOD. Is not this *darkening counſel by words without knowledge?* Job xxxviii. 2. Will not GOD ſay of you, that *ye have not ſpoken the thing that is right of me?* Job xlii. 8.

Now let me ſhew you my opinion of that text. What is GOD's command concerning CHRIST and his goſpel? The text, you know, mentions doing his commandments; why he ſays, "I will raiſe "them up a prophet from among their brethren, "like unto thee [Moſes], and will put my words "in his mouth, and he ſhall ſpeak unto them "all that I ſhall command him. And it ſhall "come to paſs, that whoſoever will not hearken "unto my words which he ſhall ſpeak in my "name,

" name, I will requite it of him," Deut. xviii. 18, 19. John brings this in, " And this is his " commandment, that we ſhould believe on the " name of his ſon JESUS CHRIST, and love one " another, as he gave us commandment," 1 *John* iii. 23. Now, ſuppoſe GOD ſhould *open the door of faith to a man*, Acts xiv. 27. and *fulfil all the good pleaſure of his goodneſs in him, and the work of faith with power*, 2 Theſ. i. 11. inſomuch that GOD ſhould *purify his heart by faith*, Acts xv. 9. would not the above commands be obeyed by ſuch a man? ſeeing *he hath received grace* (by CHRIST) *for obedience to the faith*, Rom. i. 5. or, in other words, he hath been enabled to believe through grace; or, by GOD's gracious gift of faith, he is enabled *to believe and obey the goſpel.*

AHIMAAZ. Certainly the above commands are done, or obeyed by ſuch a man; becauſe, as you ſay, he has *received grace for obedience to the faith*; and if the grace of GOD doth not produce obedience to the doctrines of faith, what does? John ſays, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*; but the world always overcomes an unbeliever, and ever will. It is faith that purifies the heart; and he that is deſtitute of this grace is filled with guilt, enmity, and errors, and therefore as far from doing the commandments as Satan himſelf.

CUSHI. Very true. Well, you find that all the law and the prophets hang on the hinge of love; but no man by his natural power can reach

reach this hinge, becauſe the *carnal mind is enmity*, Now, ſuppoſe God ſhould fulfil this promiſe to a man, namely, *circumciſe his heart to love the Lord God with all his heart, and with all his ſoul, that he might live*, Deut. xxx. 6. and enable a man to ſay, as John did, *we love him becauſe he firſt loved us*, —and ſuch a man doth in his heart love both God and his neighbour—would not ſuch an one do the commandments, ſeeing the ſcriptures declare, that *love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law?* And what ſays God of the faith of that man? why, *he that believes ſhall be ſaved*; and what ſays the Holy Ghoſt of the love of him? why he ſays, *he that loveth dwelleth in God and God dwelleth in him.*

If this be the truth of the matter, does not ſuch a man do the commandments? when God himſelf works in him both *inclination* and *motion*; or, to ſpeak in the dialect of ſcripture, *it is God that works in him both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 13. And if it be God's work in him, what has ſuch a man to glory in but the grace of God? *Faith is the gift of God*, and the work of God; *this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent*, John vi. 29. It is real faith in Jesus Christ, and pure love to God, that produces evangelical obedience: as it is written, the grace of God *teacheth men to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſt, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the world*, Tit. ii. 12. Therefore we may conclude, that whoſo-

ever

ever does not attribute his obedience to the grace of God, robs God of the glory of his own work; and he that aſcribes it to free-will and human power, deifies himſelf.

Ahimaaz. I am ſweetly inſtructed, and abundantly ſatisfied, with your opinion of the text, it tallies ſo exactly with my own experience; nor do I believe that all the advocates for free-will and ſelf-righteouſneſs upon earth could eraſe your evangelical ſentiments from my judgment. I evidently ſee that it is the *faithful man* to whom the great reward is promiſed; and it is audacious pride in men to attribute that glory to fleſhly works which is due only to the God of grace:—the humble believer is preſerved, while the lofty work-monger meets with his juſt deſerts. Well might the Pſalmiſt ſay, *O love the Lord all ye his ſaints: for the Lord preſerveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer*, Pſalm xxxi. 23. It is clear to me that your doctrine wiſely ſecures the glory of our ſalvation to God, and affords comfort and eſtabliſhment to his adopted children; and, if I am not much miſtaken, the glory of God, and the ſalvation of his elect by Jesus Christ, was the ultimate end that God had in view when he created the world; and that end he ſtill aims at in his redeeming and reconciling ſinners to himſelf; yea, his government of the world, as well as his works of creation and redemption, of providence and grace, was from the firſt the great and grand deſign of

the

the Almighty; which will be accompliſhed when GOD diſplays *the riches of his grace in glory by Jeſus Chriſt*. Then it ſhall be *known by the church, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wiſdom of God*, Eph. iii. 30.

CUSHI. Now you ſpeak like one of the true circumciſion, which worſhip GOD in the Spirit, rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and place no confidence in the fleſh. But in ſome things I think you ſavour ſo much of the old caſk, that you are, like Moab, *ſettled on your lees*, Jer. xlviii. 11.

AHIMAAZ. Though you are not a profeſſor of Greek or Hebrew, yet I find you are a very nice critic in the *language of Canaan*, Iſa. xix. 18.

CUSHI. I have often heard of Gentlemen who have endeavoured to tear me to pieces for a breach of grammar, which is but a breach of ſenſe and ſounds at moſt, and can only communicate a jargon to the ear; while ſuch have made fifty breaches in divinity in one diſcourſe, which miniſters deſtruction to the ſoul. Therefore an ungrammatical divine is ten thouſand times better than a learned and eloquent Deiſt, though he be dignified with the title of learned. The bleſſed Saviour never made one breach in divinity, though, according to our rules, he made one in grammar, when he ſaid, *Before Abraham was I AM.*

But to return to our ſubject; the glory of all good works wrought in men ought to be attributed to GOD, *from whom every good and every*

perfect gift cometh. Hence the real church of God owns, to the honour of her head, that *the Lord had wrought all her works in her,* Isa. xxvi. 12. For my part I have narrowly observed the lives of God's elect, who appear to be found in the truth, and called by grace; and by what I can gather, they are the only *workers unto the kingdom of God.* I generally find them employed like their blessed Lord; sometimes weeping and carrying the cross; at other times employed in acts of charity to the utmost of their ability; at other times at war with some sore temptation, besetting sin, or spreading error; at other times opposing the wise disputers of this world, who oppose the sovereignty of their Maker, and justify themselves; sometimes I find them at the work of self-examination; at other times citing themselves before the tribunal of God for some misdemeanor, fighting against the flesh, confessing their faults, justifying their God, imploring forgiveness, and seeking reconciliation with him, as the summit of all their happiness; sometimes I find them bemoaning the loss of their Lord, and earnestly seeking his face; at other times with the state of some poor sinner on their minds, travelling in birth till Christ be formed in him; at other times *with the high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand,* Psalm cxlix. 6. at other times I find them condoling the miserable, or *weeping with them that weep;* and sometimes *holding forth the word of life,*

as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God, 1 Pet. iv. 10. in ſhort, I never could apply the LORD's divine ſalutation of *all hail*, Matt. xxviii. 9. to any but to theſe; for theſe, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, may be called *holy workfolks*.

I have narrowly watched the various tribes of legal workers, and indeed they ſometimes ſeem to out-run the real ſaint in outward appearance; but, as the LORD ſays, there are laſt that ſhall be firſt, and firſt laſt; for many are called, but few choſen. While the ſelf righteous remain deſtitute of grace, whatever outward ſhew they may make, GOD is not glorified in them; their principles are corrupt, their judgments filled with confuſion; their motives are baſe (while deſtitute of the faith of GOD's elect, and ſelf is the end aimed at in all their ſhew of devotion); they expect to bring in GOD a debtor to them, while, as the LORD ſays, all their works are to be ſeen of men. I have often heard them abuſe the ſovereignty of GOD, and attribute tyranny to their Maker, *whoſe judgment muſt be according to truth*; at other times calling his decrees blaſphemous, though they *bring forth a ſaving knowledge of God's mind and will, and make the barren heart of a ſinner like a fruitful field*; at other times, I find them abuſing the teſtimony of GOD's ſervants—conſtruing their words to a ſenſe they never intended—and drawing concluſions that never entered their thoughts, in order to bring the grace of GOD into contempt; at other times,

I find them ſo profuſe with the mercy of GOD, as to entail it on all the human race; and at other times ſo ſparing, as to declare that ſome of the LORD's redeemed are in hell. In ſhort, pride, arrogance, ſelf-ſeeking, and ſelf-deifying, is all that ever I could ſee in the ſelf-righteous free-willer;—confounding the ſenſe of GOD's word, and rebellion againſt his ſovereign will, has ever diſcovered itſelf in all that I have had a knowledge of; and ſuch proceedings appear to me to be no better than an introduction to the performances exhibited in hell.

O ſinner, lay by pleading thy own merit, for GOD will ſurely *reject thy confidences* to the end of the chapter: *Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophecied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity*, Matt. vii. 22, 23. Thus you ſee that hell itſelf will not cure the legaliſt of boaſting; nor will the encomiums of the Judge himſelf ever ſet the elect at it; they will ſtick to their being unprofitable ſervants to the laſt, as has been already obſerved; and it muſt be ſo, for the LORD declares that *he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted, and he that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed.*

AHIMAAZ. I ſee clearly that faith is a ſoul-humbling, ſelf-emptying, and ſelf-abaſing grace, as well as an evidence of things not ſeen; but I am

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at times led to doubt whether I have any faith at all.

Cushi. Didſt thou never diſcover in the word of God, as well as in the firſt open viſion that thou hadſt, an amiableneſs and a ſuitableneſs in the Saviour, as he is ſet forth in the word, inſomuch that thy very ſoul went out after him?—that was Faith's eye that diſcovered the object of life; *He that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but he ſhall have the light of life*, John viii. 12. And haſt thou not found thy heart ſo bent for a part and lot in him, that all the world hath appeared as nothing when compared to him?—that is Faith's power, inclining the will to chuſe and embrace him above all other objects: *He that comes to God muſt believe that he is a rewarder*; and again, *Faith lays hold on eternal life.* Thus Faith ſhines on the underſtanding, and diſcovers the Saviour as the object moſt deſirable, and then inclines the will to chuſe him; and then, laſtly, ſhe calls in love to admire her choice; this is the grace that availeth—*neither circumciſion availeth any thing nor uncircumciſion, but faith worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6. And as ſoon as love comes into the ſoul, ſhe caſts out ſlaviſh fear, and brings in her own attendants, which are joy and peace—God *fill you with joy and peace in believing*, Rom. xv. 13. The believer now cannot expreſs his ſenſations—*whom having not ſeen he loves; and though now he ſees him not, yet, believing, he rejoices with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8.

AHIMAAZ. What you have ſaid of faith my ſoul has often experienced, and ſweetly enjoyed; therefore I hope I am really bleſſed with that ſpiritual grace; and I do find that it purifies my heart—for anſwers of pardon and peace are often brought to me from the Saviour by Faith's prayer.

CUSHI. Then thou art upon the foundation, and may ſay with the Apoſtle, *this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we aſk he heareth us, and we have the thing deſired*, 1 John v. 14. Thy faith is genuine—a real evidence of things not ſeen. Poverty of ſpirit is a ſure mark of thoſe that ſhall *obtain the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. iii. 14. When a man ſees the inſufficiency of his own righteouſneſs, he accepts an imputed one; when he feels his loſt eſtate, he is thankful for a Saviour; when he is conſcious of the infinite debt that he has contracted, he flies to the ſurety; and when ſenſible of the deceitfulneſs of his own heart, that he dares place no confidence in the fleſh, he embraces the rock for want of a ſhelter; and when his refuges of lies are all ſwept away, and his falſe hopes rooted up, then he digs deep, and founds all on the Rock of Ages. This is the man that is poor in ſpirit:—Stripped of pride, and humble in heart, like the poor Prodigal, he comes to GOD, with humble confeſſion, knocks at Mercy's door, and begs the bread of heaven; ſuch an one is ſure of the prize—*Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit*,

ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Matt. v. 3.

Thirdly, the Holy Ghoſt is ſent into the believer's heart, to influence, enlighten, and inſtruct his underſtanding and conſcience, and to bear a joint witneſs with conſcience that the believer is juſtified by his faith;—where there uſed to be nothing but the ſentence of ſelf-condemnation, and the tormenting accuſation of an evil conſcience. Things are ſo changed, that the believer finds the accuſation is ſilenced, and a joint teſtimony for GOD is evidently felt and enjoyed;—*he that believeth hath the witneſs in himſelf, for the ſpirit beareth witneſs*, 1 John v. 6. 10. Theſe things enable ſouls to ſay, *Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience*; as I ſaid before, the believer hath a joint witneſs; *for the Spirit beareth witneſs with our ſpirits that we are the children of God*, Rom. viii. 16. Thus you ſee that love, joy, peace, and faith, are the *firſt fruits of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 23. and the ſpirit of theſe fruits, is the foretaſte, and the *earneſt of our* [future] *inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, unto the praiſe of his glory*, Eph. i. 14.

AHIMAAZ. I clearly ſee that my ſoul is intereſted in the covenant of grace; nor am I without the evidence, the firſt fruits, and the earneſt that you have mentioned; and I believe, according to my preſent frame and views, that I ſhall never doubt again; *thou*, LORD, *of thy good-*

neſs, haſt made my bill ſo ſtrong. I ſuppoſe that Prodigalis enjoyed theſe *heavenly bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus*, theſe ſweet foretaſtes of heaven, in a wonderful degree; for it is often ſeen, that a miſerable Prodigal meets with a conſpicuous deliverance, and a ſoul-humbling reception, when God *gives him repentance unto life.* And indeed if ſuch poor ſouls had not, it would be impoſſible for them to believe to their eternal ſalvation; they having ſuch a dreadful ſight of an angry God, and their ſinful ſelves, it requires a work of faith with power, to put their unbelief to the bluſh, and the devil and conſcience to ſilence; nothing will confound theſe but a wonderful ray, an almighty deliverance, and a divine and all-prevailing evidence.

Cushi. That is another excellent ſpeech; you begin to mend upon it, I think. But to your enquiry. Prodigalis did, I believe, enjoy as much of the foretaſtes of heaven as moſt do, until the ſpirit of grace had armed him with the whole armour of God, and then he led him forth as an armed *ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt, to be tempted of the devil.*

Ahimaaz. It is amazing to me that the devil ſhould be ſo unwearied in tempting the children of God, ſeeing he has met with nothing but repeated diſappointments; beſides, the Saviour has promiſed power to his children, ſufficient to vanquiſh *all the power of the devil; inſomuch that nothing ſhall by any means hurt them,* Luke x. 19.

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The devil muſt know this, becauſe he never could deſtroy one of GOD's elect; *and as the gates of hell ſhall not prevail*, Matt. xvi. 18. I am ſurprized that Satan does not raiſe the ſiege as an *aſſailant*, and get weary of the ſuit as a plaintiff.

CUSHI. There is no likelihood of that; Satan ſtill ploughs in hope; and though he cannot deſtroy the elect, yet if he can deſtroy their peace, or get them to rebel againſt GOD, it is pleaſing to him: the devil has a feaſt when we have a faſt. And on the other hand, when we are on the mount the devil has a double hell: beſides, his enmity againſt CHRIST and his elect is ſo deeply rooted, that he cannot endure the ſovereignty of the Saviour, nor the objects of his choice.

AHIMAAZ. But why is the devil ſo incenſed againſt the Saviour, any more than againſt GOD the Father?

CUSHI. Several reaſons may be aſſigned for it; Firſt, The LORD CHRIST left the rebel-angels in their rebellion, when he *charged them with folly*, Job iv. 18. Secondly, He curſed and condemned their prime leader in Eden, Gen. iii. 14. Thirdly, He *reſerved them in everlaſting chains* [debarred of light] *under darkneſs to the final judgment*, Jude 6. while, on the other hand, he confirmed the elect angels by an irrevocable decree; took them from the baſis of free-will; and fixed them in immutable love and almighty power; ſo as to render it impoſſible for them ever to fall, as the other had done. They are not left now to the freedom

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of their own will, but confirmed in their glorious Head CHRIST; who is therefore called, *the Head of all principality and power*, Col. ii. 10. And as the angels are confirmed by the Saviour in eternal friendſhip, their willingneſs to renounce their former ſtanding in the freedom of their own will; their ready acquieſcence in, and thankful acceptance of confirmation in CHRIST the elect Head, in whom GOD had predeſtinated their everlaſting ſtanding: for this reaſon, they are called *elect angels*; and their acquieſcence is called a *reconciliation*, though they were never at enmity: *And having made peace through the blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things to himſelf; by him, I ſay, whether they be things in* EARTH *or things in* HEAVEN, Col. i. 20.

This is one cauſe of the devil's enmity againſt election; and he has got thouſands in the world who make a profeſſion of religion that are influenced by him, and boldly eſpouſe and defend his cauſe againſt the ſovereign will of the Almighty. The great and terrible day of the LORD will diſcover many wonderful and awful ſcenes of this ſort, to the everlaſting confuſion of many who now triumph in it.

Secondly, It is a moſt galling and degrading conſideration to a proud and lofty ſpirit, as the devil is, that fallen men, after they were ſeduced by Satan, were found under the condemnation and curſe of GOD, as well as themſelves; and when both natures appeared before GOD equally

condemned and on a level; that the Saviour ſhould reject the angelic nature, and aſſume the human—*for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham*, Heb. ii. 16. This ſovereign act—this diſcriminating grace of the Saviour, the devil hates.

Thirdly, By the Saviour's death on the croſs the devil ſuffered loſs in his kingdom; his dark dominions were wonderfully diſcovered; the deſtroying power of ſin (the main pillar of his empire) was taken away, inſomuch that it ſhall never deſtroy one of GOD's elect. The devil was caſt down as an accuſer, and cannot in one ſenſe be called the *god of this world*, for the *heir of all things* overcame him.

Death, another inferior ſovereign in Satan's dominions, was plagued, and ſhall ſurely be deſtroyed, Hoſea xiii. 14. Satan, ſin, and death were triumphed over, and expoſed openly on the croſs, Col. ii. 15. the devil led captive by the Saviour, Eph. iv. 8. and a kingdom of grace ſet up in the world, that ſhall ſurely demoliſh his, Dan. vii. 14.

Another reaſon that may be aſſigned of the devil's malice is, that the Saviour, whom he ſo hates, will bring him and all his legions forth to judgment: Satan is reſerved under darkneſs to judgment; and then the LORD will expoſe or *reveal the whole myſtery of iniquity*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 7, 8. Then ſhall the ſaints appear in the truth which the devil left, as Eſther did, in Vaſhti's palace,

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Eſther ii. 17. for they *ſhall be as the angels of* God *in heaven*, Matt. xxii. 30. while fallen angels ſhall be left on a level with fallen men; not at all ſuperior, unleſs it be in miſery: hence you read of ſinners going in company with *the devil and his angels*, Matt. xxv. 41. But the moſt tormenting thought to infernal pride is, that elected, redeemed, and reſtored men ſhall judge theſe infernal kings, princes, and potentates: *Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels?* 1 Cor. vi. 3. In that day it will appear, that thoſe that died in free-will and ſelf-righteouſneſs will be found among the black brigade, as ſure as there is a God that judgeth right.

Theſe are ſome of the reaſons that may be aſſigned for the devil's unlimited malice againſt the Saviour and his elect; therefore it is vain for the elect to expect reconciliation, ſeeing God has declared the war: and we may ſay of Satan's envy as the learned Milton does:

> "Never can true reconcilement grow,
> "Where deadly hate has pierc'd ſo deep."

Hence we may warrantably conclude, that the devil will never raiſe the ſiege while God has a church in the world; nor will he ever drop the ſuit, as a plaintiff, as long as he can draw one believer to liſten to his lies, yield to his temptations, or fret at his accuſations.

Ahimaaz. Pray how did he begin with Prodigalis? I ſuppoſe in a furious way, becauſe he had

had formerly been a faithful ſervant to the devil; and as he knew many of his wiles, he was the better able to expoſe them: it is often ſeen that ſuch are the moſt valiant for truth, the moſt loyal to the Saviour, and the moſt fervent in prayer. They that are *faithful to the unrighteous mammon will be ſo to the true riches*, Luke xvi. 11. *They that have much forgiven will love much*, Luke vii. 47. and *to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more*, Luke xii. 48.

Cushi. You muſt know, that Prodigalis, being ſo conſpicuouſly delivered, he thought the devil was ſo rebuked as never to attack him again; nor did he in the leaſt ſuſpect that the evils of his heart would ever make a ſecond appearance; nor that he ſhould ever loſe ſight of the Saviour. In this ſecure frame he was altogether unprepared for trial; the devil knew this, and therefore caught the opportunity. A believer may often be charged with being off his guard; but no ſuch charge can juſtly be brought againſt the devil; in this point *he is wiſer than the children of light*.

When the devil came to him he firſt poured a whole ſhower of *fiery darts* into his mind; the corruption of his heart caught the flame, *and the whole courſe of nature was ſet on fire of hell*, James iii. vi. The ſmoke beclouded his underſtanding; or (as Paul ſays), *the god of this world had blinded his eyes*: his judgment was confuſed, and every divine

vine ſenſation ſeemed to be ſwallowed up with horror and diſmay. Satan having thus gained an advantage of him, he preſented him afreſh to the bar of judicature, and there accuſed him of the very blaſphemous thoughts which himſelf injected into his mind; he tempted him to believe that he had fell from grace; he ſuggeſted hard thoughts of the Saviour to him, and then accuſed him of it. He ſuggeſted to him that he had ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and that all the confuſion and horror that Prodigalis felt were the effects of the juſt judgment of God for his unpardonable ſin; and was no leſs than an earneſt of what he would ſuffer to eternity.

Prodigalis felt for his ſoul-comforting witneſs, but he could not feel him; his faith ſeemed not to do her uſual office: therefore the poor ſoul, ſunk into the real fears of death, and horrors of hell, as bad as ever. Deſtruction appeared on one ſide, and Satan on the other; and the devil brought many of Moſes's old accuſations againſt him, as if it were Moſes that was accuſing him as an unbeliever.

Poor Prodigalis never was more confounded than now: at his firſt trial he had no ſenſible hope of mercy; but to be arraigned, after juſtification, was a myſtery too profound for him to make a judgment of. Therefore he gave all over for loſt; not doubting but he was given up as a reprobate into the hands of Satan; and that he

would certainly prevail to make him vent the horror and rebellion of his burdened heart in blaſphemous expreſſions.

While Prodigalis was ſinking in deſpondency, theſe words came with a divine power to his mind; *Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you: but rejoice inaſmuch as ye are made partakers of* CHRIST's *ſufferings*, 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. Theſe words gained the attention of the poor man, which Satan could not endure; for he can do nothing with us any longer than while he employs our mind, and we are attentive to his lies; which is his wiſdom and our folly.

The devil perceiving that poor Prodigalis was attentive to another voice, laid violently againſt him; but the other having received a little encouragement from the above text, was perſuaded that he ſhould enjoy the ſentence of juſtification again: nay, he was perſuaded that it would come with power a ſecond time: and therefore he put up theſe petitions; *Hear the right, O Lord! attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips: let my ſentence come forth from thy preſence: let thine eyes behold the things that are equal. Thou haſt proved mine heart; thou haſt viſited me in the night; thou haſt tried me*, Pſalm xvii. 1, 2, 3.

As ſoon as Prodigalis had ended his petitions, the glorious Advocate anſwered his prayer in the joy of his heart; and applied theſe words with

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ſuch power, that the ſham court grew too hot for the cunning accuſer; *No weapon formed againſt thee ſhall proſper, and every tongue that ſhall riſe againſt thee in judgment thou ſhalt condemn*, Iſa. xliv. 17.—Poor Prodigalis recovering his *ſpiritual might*, and ſeeing his beclouded evidences appear, if poſſible, ten times brighter than ever, and finding the word of GOD flow in upon his mind, he laid hold of the *ſword of the Spirit*, and ſaid to his accuſer, *It is* GOD *that juſtifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is* CHRIST *that died*, Rom. viii. 33. The devil immediately vaniſhed.

This ſham trial ſerved to teach Prodigalis the uſe of GOD's ſword; and evidently fulfilled the ſcriptures, *Submit yourſelves therefore to* GOD; *reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you*, James iv. 7.

AHIMAAZ. I dare ſay the poor man found his love warmer—his faith ſtronger—and ſaw the office, uſe, and faithfulneſs of his Advocate in a clearer light than ever he had done before. There are none that know but thoſe who experience it, how the immutable love of GOD, and the faithfulneſs of the Saviour (which appears in ſo many repeated deliverances), does endear the ALMIGHTY to the poor helpleſs believer, who is perpetually buffeted by the common enemy of GOD and man.

CUSHI. Indeed Prodigalis never had ſeen the Saviour in his office as an Advocate but once before, and in this confuſion he had loſt ſight of him:

him: but by means of trials we are led to feel our need of the Saviour in every character that he ſuſtains, which we know nothing of until various trials make us ſenſible of our need of them, and the Saviour condeſcends to appear in and fulfil them.

And I doubt the want of obſerving and conſidering theſe things is one reaſon of the dejection of too many precious ſouls in our days. Our kind interceſſor ought to be viewed in that office every time we pray. As our Mediator he is wanted when there appears a controverſy between GOD and conſcience. An Advocate and a Wonderful Counſellor muſt be felt for in temptations, or elſe the accuſer's wiſdom will be too much for us. And theſe characters our LORD ſuſtains; and he will ever diſcharge his offices with divine rectitude, if the prayer of faith implores his aid.

Prodigalis was ſo confirmed in the faithfulneſs of his LORD, and in the power of faith, that he ſecretly wiſhed the ſame trial to come over again, that he might ſhew his loyalty, his love, and his faithfulneſs to his LORD, and not diſhonour him by his unbelief, as he had done, *in giving place to the devil*; which he ſaw was a ſin reflecting diſhonour on every perfection of his LORD.

AHIMAAZ. He had better have left his reſolutions out of the conflict; for if Satan were to be let looſe upon him an hundred times, if the ſpirit of faith ceaſed to operate, he would feel the workings of unbelief more or leſs. I have been

vain enough ere now, when I have found my heart fixed, and my conſolations powerful, to defy a temptation; thinking that *my mountain ſtood ſo ſtrong that I ſhould never be moved.* But alas! what are the beſt of men againſt Satan's rage, if not panoplyed and fortified by the great JEHOVAH? It was not without cauſe that Paul bid Timothy *be ſtrong in the grace that is in* CHRIST JESUS: which ſtrength conſiſts in a firm perſuaſion of the immutable love, promiſed aid, and momentary ſupport of the Almighty GOD and Saviour CHRIST JESUS.

CUSHI. It is true what you ſay: but as *Satan deſires to have us, that he may ſift us as wheat,* for his own gratification, ſo the LORD does ſometimes enable his children to triumph over him in turn: *Rejoice not againſt me, O mine enemy! when I fall I ſhall ariſe: when I ſit in darkneſs the* LORD *ſhall be a light unto me,* Micah vii. 8. I do not ſay that the above text is a direct anſwer to the devil himſelf; but as he is the chief agent of all the enmity that is diſplayed againſt the children of GOD, it is, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, applicable to him; agreeable to the Saviour's method, when Satan tempted Peter to ſtand in the LORD's way, the LORD rebuked the agent of the action, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* When the Jews perſecuted and blaſphemed him, he ſaid, *You are of your father the devil, and the luſt of your father ye will do.* When his enemies came to take him, he ſaid, *This is your hour and the powers of darkneſs.* And when Judas had yielded

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the bent of his mind to gender with the devil's influence, the LORD withdrew his own reſtraining power, opened his heart with a *ſop*, that Judas might perpetrate the murder that his wicked and mercenary heart had conceived: *And when he had received the ſop, Satan entered into him:* and immediately after the conception was brought forth, in his betraying the innocent Son of GOD.

AHIMAAZ. You are right in levelling your arrow at the devil; for I believe there is no wickedneſs practiſed by mortals, but he is chief agent in the ſcheme, and a joint executor of it. But I ſuppoſe that Satan did not attempt to bring poor Prodigalis a ſecond time to his ſham court of judicature; did he?

CUSHI. Indeed Satan brought him to his ſham court of judicature more than once, twice, or thrice: but not the next time; if he had, Prodigalis had been in a meaſure prepared for him. But the devil finds that we have various diſcipline to paſs through, therefore he varies his ſnares alſo: for ſhould he conſtantly way-lay us in one continued path, the bird would ſoon get as cunning as the fowler: for as the wiſe man ſays, *Surely in vain the net is ſpread in the ſight of any bird*, Prov. i. 17. No, no; Satan (in this ſenſe) is no fool; though (in another ſenſe) he is the greateſt of fools; becauſe he is the firſt tranſgreſſor; ſupreme in miſchief, and ſupreme in miſery; the fartheſt from GOD, and conſequently the fartheſt from true wiſdom.

AHIMAAZ. Pray, how did he intangle Prodigalis the third time? I long to hear; becauſe ſome part of your relation ſo well agrees with my own experience; and that is refreſhing and eſtabliſhing to me. For my part, I am for what I can get; and you know that Paul tells us *to covet earneſtly the beſt gifts.*

CUSHI. Indeed you have ſpoken the truth: you are in reality for what you can get; and one of the beſt ſucklings that ever I took to nouriſh: and would to GOD that I was as good a wet nurſe as Paul was in his days, when he ſaid, *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 7.

The way that Satan made his next attempt on Prodigalis was as follows: The poor man expected, that if ever Satan made another attempt, it would be in the old way, in which he thought he ſhould be able to meet him: this made him too ſecure. Therefore Satan laid by his violent aſſaults, and his cloven foot, and endeavoured to come in imitation of the workings of grace; or, as the apoſtle ſays, *He transformed himſelf into an angel of light:* and catching Prodigalis off his watch-tower, and too ſecure, he inſenſibly led him to the court of equity; where he endeavoured to enthrone human reaſon, as the only competent judge of right and wrong. This ſcheme took with Prodigalis: he had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of the devil being in all this: therefore, inſtead of reſiſting him, he gave him all

all poſſible attention, and was determined to hear him out. Satan having gained his ear and attention, proceeded to ſtart every puzzling difficulty, and ſeeming contradiction, in form following: The plaintiff ſheweth, Firſt, That there are many myſteries in the Bible dark and obſcure, and the beſt and wiſeſt of men differ in judgment reſpecting them. Secondly, That the myſtery of the Trinity is incomprehenſible; and that thouſands of the wiſe and learned people deny that. Thirdly, That the path to heaven by regeneration is a path that excludes thouſands of ſouls from ſalvation; and is a road that is to the laſt degree perilous. Fourthly, That the greateſt part that are venturing on that hazardous journey are poor illiterate and deſpicable people. Fifthly, That thoſe who are the leaders of ſuch bigotted people are, in the general, people lightly eſteemed, much deſpiſed, yea, and ſtoutly withſtood by the great, wiſe, and learned of the world. Sixthly, That the doctrine of election leaves wife, family, friends, yea, and perhaps all that are near or dear in the ties of affinity or blood, out of the number ſaved. Seventhly, the plaintiff ſheweth, That the beſt of friends and of benefactors, as well as the majority of the whole world, are averſe to it, and incenſed againſt it. Eighthly, That the Moſt High might have prevented the fall of men and devils if he would. Ninthly, That all domeſtic comforts in wife, family, food, and pleaſure, muſt be fore-

gone, if divine impreſſions were laſting, conſcience kept tender, or the daily croſs continued. Tenthly, That faſting, prayer, ſelf-denial, and hourly abſtinence, muſt be rigidly purſued, or elſe all would fall to ruins at laſt, and hell would be the hotter for ſuch a barren profeſſion. Eleventhly, That Cain, Judas, Eſau, and Saphira, had fell after all their profeſſion; and were worſe than thoſe that never made any: *for where little was given little would be required*; and therefore the more ignorant the more ſafe. Twelfthly, That the path to heaven was ſtrait and narrow, and people that would be ſingular in religion were expoſed to all the ſhafts of men and devils; and that CHRIST was an auſtere and rigid maſter: that there would be nothing but croſs upon croſs, as we ſee in Job; and ſtripe upon ſtripe, as in Ephraim, even to the end of the journey. Thirteenthly, That the conjugal enjoyment of a wife, an affectionate indulgence of a child, a jocoſe word, an innocent ſmile, or even a genteel ſuit of apparel, would be an *iniquity to be puniſhed by the judge*; *the* LORD, *whoſe name is Jealous, is ſo jealous a* GOD.

The plaintiff further ſhewed, That the Bible was a doubtful revelation; many obſcure phraſes, and ſeeming contradictions, appeared palpable in it: and that many of the learned and wiſe had examined it, arraigned it, and condemned it; and had ſet up their own unbiaſſed and unerring reaſon as the only lord paramount, deemed capable

pable of cenſuring and determining every matter in debate relative to heaven, earth, or hell.

The plaintiff further ſhewed, That the continual croſs that generally attended thoſe of this ſingular way of religion was, that there would be an heart to love, and an eye to pity the poor, which would be croſſed with a beggar's pocket; there would be an uncommon bigotted ſpirit to the ſingular party in religion, and a great anxiety to make proſelytes, which would be croſſed with a heavy perſecution. Spending time in this ſervice, and neglecting other buſineſs, had, and would again, bring many *to ſuffer hunger, cold, and nakedneſs*. Beſides, people of this ſtrange way make the path to heaven much more difficult than it really is: *They are righteous overmuch, and ready to deſtroy themſelves at it*: they talk of being *partakers of the divine nature*, and keep preſſing after ſuch a degree of holineſs by the Spirit, as they call it, that their ſin is not unlike Adam's, *who wanted to be like* GOD.

And laſtly, the plaintiff added, That the things which he had mentioned were conſonant, and not repugnant to ſome of the plain parts of what is called ſcripture; where GOD (if he be the author of the book) ſays, *Let us reaſon together*, Iſa. i. 18.

AHIMAAZ. Why, the devil is an excellent pleader.

CUSHI. In one ſenſe he is; but not in another: he can plead againſt us; but he is too proud to

plead guilty before GOD, too vile to plead innocent; and without a foundation to plead for mercy. The devil brought all theſe things to Prodigalis, in order to prejudice his mind againſt the truth of GOD, that he might raiſe rebellion in his heart. Nor was Satan's attempt without effect; for Prodigalis did not expect a temptation with ſo mild a bait: he expected that every appearance of Satan would be in a ſtorm; and therefore he liſtened to him: carnal reaſon approved of the ſuggeſtions; fleſh and blood alſo gave into it; and, by the aſſiſtance of unbelief, Satan carried all before him.

Now was Prodigalis filled with carnal reaſonings about the ſovereign grace of his Maker; the perilous path to heaven; and the few, the very few that ſeemed to be travelling on that ſingular way. He ſoon found the government of the world, and the ſalvation of all the human race, to lay with an intolerable weight upon his ſhoulders; and he was impiouſly led to infringe upon the prerogative of his LORD, whoſe undoubted *right it is to do as he will with his own*, Matt. xx. 15. without *giving an account of any of his matters*, Job xxxiii. 13.

AHIMAAZ. There is one thing in Satan's plea that I am amazed at; and that is, that thoſe who were ſingular in their religion were expoſed to "all the ſhafts of men and devils:" can Satan ſpeak againſt himſelf?

CUSHI.

CUSHI. *Satan is not divided againſt himſelf* in the management of his kingdom; if he was, *how could his kingdom ſtand?* But he can ſpeak againſt himſelf, deny himſelf, and rebuke himſelf, when theſe things will ſerve his turn. He ſpeaks againſt himſelf in every falſe prophet that rebukes ſin; he denies himſelf in every deiſt that denies the being or exiſtence of fallen angels; and he rebuked himſelf, when ſome of his own children (in mockery of Paul) were commanding of an evil ſpirit to leave the heart of a ſinner; whoſe anſwer was, *Paul I know, but who are you?* and then *overcame them, and ſent them out of the houſe wounded and naked,* Acts xix. 16.

Poor Prodigalis began to be timorous about the difficult way to the kingdom; he yielded to the carnal fear of man, and trembled at perſecution; fleſh and blood was conſulted about the doctrine of particular redemption; and carnal reaſon bore violently againſt the doctrines of election and predeſtination; which influenced Prodigalis with a ſpirit of murmuring and rebellion againſt the diſcriminating grace of his GOD; but he ſoon found, like Paul, that it was *hard work to kick againſt the pricks:* he found his mind began to be confuſed; fear and horror laid a freſh hold of his conſcience; no peace of mind was enjoyed; his mouth at a throne of grace was ſtopped; a ſenſe of the divine favour was ſenſibly ſuſpended; and ſhame and confuſion covered his face. And as the ſtate of his own ſoul began to

be perilous, he was obliged to employ the powers of his mind nearer home, and leave the ſalvation and management of the world to GOD; whoſe infinite wiſdom needs no counſel of ours, nor will his ſupreme power, and abſolute prerogative, ever be yielded or given up to us.

AHIMAAZ. How ſubtle an adverſary is Satan! who would have thought that ſuch an one as Prodigalis, a man ſo wonderfully delivered, and who had experienced ſuch ſuperabounding grace, could be ſo eaſily led from an humble ſubmiſſion to the will of GOD, even to rebel in his heart againſt him, and againſt thoſe very truths that had made him free; but, alas! what is man if left to himſelf? Pray how was he delivered out of that ſnare?

CUSHI. As he was one day reaſoning and diſputing in his heart againſt the doctrines of election and particular redemption, and impiouſly cenſuring the ſovereignty of his Maker, theſe words came to his mind with power, and full fraught with divine reproof: *Produce your cauſe, ſaid the* LORD, *bring forth your ſtrong reaſons ſaith the King of Jacob*, Iſa. xli. 21. This made Prodigalis tremble; he thought within himſelf, that if he juſtified all the world it would be of no force againſt the judgment of GOD; and if he held the whole ſyſtem of natural religion, that would afford him no ſalvation below the grave; for if GOD was his enemy, who could be his friend in eternity? He went at laſt with an

an humble confeſſion of his folly to his LORD, and intreated him to undertake for him, and extricate him out of this puzzling, this ſoul-diſtreſſing labyrinth of confuſion; and the bleſſed Saviour was intreated of him, and gave him a wonderful deliverance; he ſent ſuch light and comfort into his ſoul as he thought he never had experienced before; the darkneſs and confuſion of his troubled heart, and his carnal reaſonings againſt the ſovereign will of his LORD, vaniſhed, and his love and zeal burned ſtronger for truth than ever.

AHIMAAZ. I evidently ſee that there is no growth in grace nor in knowledge, without croſſes and trials; for, as Hezekiah ſaith, *by theſe things men live, and in all theſe things is the life of our ſpirits.* A child of GOD often gains ground by ſuch ſtumblings, and gets freſh diſcoveries out of confuſion; for GOD *diſcovereth deep things out of darkneſs, and bringeth out to light the ſhadow of death.*

CUSHI. Very true; and this was the caſe with Prodigalis; he had been for ſome time in the buſineſs of an Attorney, and had learnt many curious quibbles of law, and had formerly entertained no ſmall opinion of his nervous logic. Satan knew this, therefore he ſwelled his pride of that talent, exalted his former applauded reaſon to the deciſive chair, and then ſhewed the inconſiſtency of his new religion with his former rules of logic. Prodigalis, having loſt a ſenſe

of

of his comfort, and the ſight of his Advocate, diſplayed his former talent; but as reaſon was too ſtiff to ſubmit to a ſuperior power, pride called in rebellion; fleſh and blood was conferred with concerning the myſteries of heaven; and the more reaſon laboured, the more ſhe was confounded; unbelief, getting the upper hand, gave the lie to all that was divine; and thus, between a confounding devil, and confounded reaſon, the trial ended in wind and confuſion, and Prodigalis, with all his natural abilities, was found in the balance of the ſanctuary to be *lighter than vanity*.

AHIMAAZ. Nevertheleſs I dare ſay this trial turned out to a good account to poor Prodigalis, for it muſt teach him the inſufficiency of natural reaſon to determine divine matters, and muſt undoubtedly convince him of the need of GOD's promiſed ſpirit to guide him into all truth.

CUSHI. Yes, my brother, Prodigalis loſt nothing but *droſs* in this fiery trial; he was effectually convinced that the Spirit of GOD was the only all-ſufficient arbitrator in divine cauſes, and that reaſon muſt ſubmit even to faith, inſtead of dictating to GOD. This was diſplayed to him in his after-contemplations on the faith of Abraham, whoſe obedience is ſet forth as our example, after whoſe footſteps we are to copy, and who is called the father of us all. Hence we are commanded *to look to Abraham our father, and to Sarah that bare us*, Iſa. li. 2. and to tread in the

the *ſteps of our father Abraham*, Rom. iv. 12. *who is the father of us all*, ver. 16. Prodigalis conſidered firſt the call of Abraham, and the obedience of his faith; in which act he found that carnal reaſon was wholly excluded;—*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went*, Heb. xi. 8. By faith he obeyed, and went; while Abraham and his reaſon were kept entirely out of the ſecret—for he *obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went*, which reaſon would call a wild-gooſe chace. Abraham received a promiſe of the land of Canaan, and *that he ſhould be heir of the world*, Rom. iv. 13. and yet God *gave him none inheritance in it, no not ſo much as to ſet a foot on*, Acts vii. 5. Abraham had a good eſtate behind him in Ur, and had left that to *wander in a ſtrange land*, where he had all in hope, but nothing in hand. If reaſon had been conſulted in this matter, her determination would have been this, "One bird in the hand is worth two in the buſh;" and therefore, like Balaam, ſhe would be for *getting herſelf back again*, Numbers xxii. 34.

When God made Abraham a great Prince, and his lady a Princeſs, Reaſon would have expected the *palace of Salem*; but, inſtead of that, the king of that city *bleſſes him as the leſs, for without all contradiction the leſs is bleſſed of the better*, Heb. vii. 7.—gives him refreſhment—*takes tithes of him* as his Sovereign and High Prieſt,

but

but gives him no invitation to the city, much leſs to the palace. All theſe riddles Abraham's faith had to explain; which would have remained as obſcure to human reaſon as *Samſon's riddle did to the Philiſtines. If we plow not with Chriſt's heifer we ſhall never find out his riddles.* Abraham's leaving his own country, was to teach him that this world was not his home;—his travelling in pilgrimage was explained by faith, that *this was not his reſt, becauſe it is polluted,* as the land of Canaan was with filthy inhabitants;—his promiſe of the land of Canaan, and of the world, faith conſtrue to mean an heavenly country, *Heb.* xi. 16. and a new world to come; Abraham's not inheriting Salem, after he had received the promiſe of the whole land, and was made a Prince in it, faith led him to underſtand, that he muſt ſeek Jeruſalem that is above, *as that city that hath foundations, whoſe maker and builder is God,* Heb. xi. 10.

Theſe things Abraham had in view, and his faith brought them to live in his ſoul;—an earneſt and a foretaſte exiſted in Abraham's heart by faith, and thus his *faith was the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen.* The way that theſe things were to be obtained was ſhewed to Abraham in the offering up of his ſon (as typical of CHRIST), which Reaſon would have called *murder* inſtead of *obedience.* Abraham communed with his GOD in the promiſes that he had revealed to him, and enjoyed much

much ſweetneſs in the bleſſings contained in them; and by his faith he lived in a ſtate of perfect reconciliation and friendſhip with his God, and endured his pilgrimage like Moſes—*as ſeeing him who is inviſible*; which, to reaſon, is no better than a plain contradiction, and is called *enthuſiaſm* to this day.

As Abraham lived, ſo he died; faith attended his laſt moments, and, like a divine and conſtant friend, lent her ſupporting aid in the moment of diſſolution, and handed the redeemed ſoul to the centre of all happineſs—*he died in faith*, and *received the end of his faith, the ſalvation of his ſoul.* His ſhield is now his everlaſting portion, he enjoys Canaan in the beſt ſenſe, and Salem is his royal city in every ſenſe; and he, like Melchiſedec of old, is no leſs than a King and a Prieſt in it.

Ahimaaz. Theſe contemplations muſt be very ſweet to Prodigalis, as well as teach him to keep Reaſon in her proper place; that, in matters of divinity, wiſdom may be aſked of him *that giveth liberally and upbraideth not*; beſides, he muſt ſee the neceſſity of being kept by the mighty power of God, when he ſaw the various ſtratagems of Satan, and the advantages that he had hitherto gained over him.

Cushi. It is a wretched fault in Chriſtians to neglect prayer in theſe times of trouble; they often fall to reaſoning, diſputing, and contriving, inſtead of ſupplicating; this is their loſs, and

the devil's gain. This is evident in Jonah, when God commanded him to denounce his judgments on Nineveh.—He begins to reaſon on the goodneſs of God, and of his ſlowneſs to anger, and then concludes, that if God repented of the evil his reputation would fall to the ground; he then began to contrive which way to ſave his reputation, and Satan told him by a flight to Joppa;—Jonah tells you, that *they that obſerve lying vanities forſake their own mercy*, Jonah ii. 8. You hear nothing of Jonah's prayer till he got into the fiſh's belly; ſo far from it, that neither the importunity nor the example of the heathen mariners could draw one petition from Jonah. The ſailors called *every man upon his* God, and deſired Jonah to try his intereſt with *his*; but he would rather ſink than ſupplicate—ſo ſtubborn is the ſinner when carried away with a lying vanity, in defence of his own ſuppoſed merit, worth, or reputation. However, Prodigalis found Satan too ſubtle an Attorney for him, and therefore he was glad to become a *pauper* upon the crown of heaven, where his inheritance lay, and where it was well ſecured by his Saviour (under whoſe direction only he could gain the ſuit), who is by profeſſion an Advocate, and by nature and repute *wonderful in counſel and excellent in working*.

Ahimaaz. I greatly admire the inſtructions that Prodigalis got by his laſt trial; for I am fully perſuaded that he that denies the ſufficiency of

of his own reaſon in divine matters, ſhall ever appear the moſt reaſonable man; while, on the other hand, thoſe that exalt it againſt divine revelation, appear of all fleſh the moſt unreaſonable. Divinity is the great beautifier and ornamentor of nature; and to deify human nature, in contempt of divinity, is to leave her expoſed to infinite and everlaſting contempt and deformity; for it is thought by ſome, that an enemy to GOD will not appear at the general doom in a human ſhape, ſin will deform them, and make them not unlike evil angels; and, if ſo, it is not without a meaning that the wicked are called *ſerpents*, which is Satan's name, and was once the ſhape that he aſſumed; nor is it without a meaning that the *ſaints ſhall appear as the angels of God in heaven.* Pray how did Prodigalis go on after this happy deliverance; did the old Attorney attack him again?

CUSHI. There is no fear of that; Satan will never give up tempting long together. Prodigalis found it as his bleſſed LORD and maſter did in his days—*And when the devil had ended all his temptations he departed from him for a ſeaſon*, Luke iv. 13. that he might come again at another ſeaſonable opportunity. Prodigalis walked ſome time very comfortably, and enjoyed much ſweetneſs in his ſoul, from the rich mercy of his LORD; who not only brought him to repentance at firſt, but ſtill delivered him out of his troubles and difficulties, and kindly ſealed the pardon

of his manifold infirmities home upon his conſcience. This comfortable gale continued ſome few weeks with Prodigalis, and he expected it would continue to the end of his voyage; but, inſtead of that, it began gradually to abate as before, which he was much grieved at. The Bible, that had afforded him ſuch ſweet diſcoveries and comfort, ſeemed to conceal its wonders; the light ſhined not on it as uſual, therefore David's petition, *ſhew me wonders in thy law*, was very ſeaſonable to him. He found himſelf much ſtreightened in prayer alſo—he had not that *freedom of acceſs with confidence* as formerly, and therefore little delighted in it. Theſe things are very trying to a poor ſoul that has been brought into tender favour, and indulged with ſweet communion with the LORD; the poor ſoul is *like a child that is weaned from his mother, yea ſuch a ſoul is like a weaned child*, Pſalm cxxxiii. 2.

AHIMAAZ. I know what that is—my ſoul has had a ſad experience of that; to be debarred the heavenly freedom—to find divine comfort ſuſpended—to go mourning under the ſenſible frowns of the beſt of fathers, is one of the ſoreſt afflictions that a new-born ſoul can labour under.

CUSHI. It really is; but Prodigalis did not ſtay here; for he found the word of GOD preached had no effect upon him; it neither gave him reproof nor comfort; he appeared in one of the worſt of frames—cold—ſtupid—and inſenſible; and in this ſtate he continued many days, until reading

reading the Bible became a burden, and prayer a taſk; he went about his devotions like a galled horſe to the collar, or an unaccuſtomed bullock to the yoke; his ſervice was mercenary, and performed with reluctance, and ſo he continued until his ſoul was ſhut up in legal bondage. What to make of this trial he knew not;—it was a frame that he had never experienced before. In proceſs of time he began to give way to a peeviſh fretful temper, which his conſcience often ſmote him for, as it caſt a gloomy ſhade upon the glorious religion of JESUS CHRIST; beſides, he had made a great ſtir in religious matters, which had brought the eyes of many upon him; ſome *watched for his halting*, and ſome for his perſevering; thoſe that watched for his halting, could make his anger appear by cruel mockings; while thoſe that loved him were grieved, for they ſaw that his ſoul was not healthy, becauſe *his countenance was not comely*. When *peace* reigns in the conſcience, GOD *is the health of the countenance*, Pſalm xlii. 11.

This dark, cold, and lifeleſs frame, brought on a fit of unbelief, to which he ſo much yielded as at times to give up prayer, which was adding ſin to ſin; and when ſome of his aſſociates came to him for ſpiritual converſation and inſtruction, he withdrew, and, like Jeremiah, determined to *ſpeak no more in the name of the* LORD, Jer. xx. 9. This was doubling his tranſgreſſion; and at laſt he neglected the ſanctuary ſervice, and began

to draw wretched concluſions concerning his ſtate, and even gave way to doubts and fears, and conſequently to murmuring and complaining.—Now was the time for Satan to work again; accordingly he entered another action againſt him, and brought him to the court of *common pleas*, and there he attempted to appeal even to the divine oracles. The plaintiff ſhewed that a child of God could not ſin—*he that is born of God ſinneth not*, 1 John v. 18. but that Prodigalis was not one of them, for he ſinned in heart, in thought, and in word, and was guilty of the ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion, yea, of the ſin of rebellion alſo, both in heart and in lip.

Then the plaintiff aſked if he could uſe the *common pleas* of bible ſaints. Canſt thou ſay, with Hezekiah, *I beſeech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight*, 2 Kings xx. 3. Has thy heart been perfect? has it not been altogether perverſe and froward? and have not *thy lips muttered perverſeneſs*, and thy tongue uſed deceit? yea, and thou haſt even fled from the work of God. And canſt thou plead like Jeremiah—*As for me I have not haſtened from being a paſtor to follow thee?* Jer. xvii. 16. Thou art ſo far from being able to uſe ſuch pleas as theſe, that thou haſt run from the work, and by thy peeviſh temper has caſt a ſlur upon it. Canſt thou ſay, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have*

done for the houſe of my God, and for the offices thereof, Neh. xiii. 14. Nay, ſaid the plaintiff, thou haſt been at times ſo far from this, that thou haſt ſecretly wiſhed that thou never hadſt opened thy mouth at all. The plaintiff farther ſhewed that Prodigalis had been at times ſo hot upon religion as to neglect ſecular buſineſs, inſtead of being *a prudent man, and guiding his affairs with diſcretion*, Pſalm cxii. 5. therefore could never uſe the common plea of Job—*If the land cry againſt me, or that the furrows thereof complain, let thiſtles grow inſtead of wheat, and cockle inſtead of barley*, Job xxxi. 38. 40.

Ahimaaz. O what a malicious plaintiff—what a ſubtle Attorney—and what a keen accuſer that old ſerpent is! with what diligence does he watch for his opportunities to tempt poor thoughtleſs mortals! It ſeems to be his whole ſtudy and anxiety;—as the Saviour intimated to Peter, when he ſaid, *Simon, Simon, Satan hath deſired to have thee, that he may ſift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not*, Luke xxii. 31.

Cushi. To diſhonour God—oppoſe his goſpel—diſturb his ſaints—and ruin ſinners, is his whole employ; however, all his accuſations could not ſink Prodigalis into deſpair, for he had got a good hope at the bottom, *which is an anchor of the ſoul both ſure and ſtedfaſt*, Heb. vi. 19. Prodigalis was *perſecuted by Satan, but not in deſpair*; he was *caſt down, but not deſtroyed*, 2 Cor.

iv. 9. Indeed, at laſt he made a very good uſe of Satan's accuſations; for as Satan accuſed him of various ſins, Prodigalis began to confeſs them to God as faſt as the devil brought them forth; this is making the beſt of a bad matter, and out-ſhooting the enemy with his own bow. The accuſer, finding Prodigalis at this work, ſoon ceaſed his accuſations, and began to diſpute with him about his ſonſhip. The plaintiff ſhewed, that the ſaints of God in the days of old could work miracles, and caſt out devils; but Prodigalis was ſo far from that power that he could not deliver himſelf from a temptation, much leſs work miracles. The poor ſoul on a ſudden began to find the word of God flow in upon his mind, and he opened his mouth againſt his accuſer in the following manner:

The defendant ſheweth, that many have worked miracles that will never be ſaved; *many will ſay in that day*, Lord, Lord, *have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out devils, and done many wonderful works?* unto whom the Saviour will ſay, *I never knew you.* The Egyptian magicians worked miracles, and yet were no children of God. Devils may work miracles, or *lying wonders*, and be devils ſtill. Many workers of miracles the Saviour will refuſe in the great day; but a pardoned ſinner, a believer in his name, he will never diſown. The defendant ſhewed moreover, that the devil wanted the Saviour to ſatisfy him of his being the Son of

God, by ſtarting an *if*, and deſiring a miracle: *If thou be the Son of* God, *command that theſe ſtones be made bread*, Matt. iv. 3. But the Saviour would not ſatisfy his adverſary by a miracle, but left him to doubt who he was, or to find it out: which Satan ſoon did, when he perceived that no temptation gained ground. But he felt who he was when he entered upon his miniſtry—caſt out devils—and by his own Almighty power began to deſtroy Satan's works.

The adverſary gaining no ground upon Prodigalis by this, went back and puzzled him again upon the old text, *He that is born of* God *ſinneth not:* and here he foiled the poor man; for he had not a right underſtanding of that text; nor could he with conſcience uſe the ancient ſaints *common pleas*. On theſe two heads the plaintiff gained ground: therefore Prodigalis was obliged to turn away his ears from *common pleas*, and make uſe of them that are too ſeldom uſed. For after the accuſer had gained a conſiderable advantage of him from the text above quoted; namely, that *he that is born of* God ſinneth not, the defendant cried out, *The blood of* Christ *cleanſeth from all ſin*, 1 John i. 7. This put the accuſer to ſilence. The defendant finding that, produced another promiſe, ſaying, It is written, *Behold I give unto you power to tread on ſerpents and ſcorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing ſhall by any means hurt you*, Luke x. 19. This weakened the temptation greatly; therefore Prodigalis

followed him up again, saying, It is written, *My heart is fixed, trusting in the* LORD: in love my heart is fixed; nor can all your wiles ever make me hate my Sovereign, or make me loyal in your interest: therefore I am upon the rock; and it is written, *That the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, Matt. xvi. 18. *It is written, it is written*, gives a terrible blow to the accuser: he cannot stand the sword of the Spirit, nor the power of the Saviour, who is the sinner's only plea. "No falsehood can stand the touch of ce-"lestial temper," says Milton.

AHIMAAZ. It is a blessed thing to be well instructed in the word of GOD: the word of truth is both sword and shield. It is *through the comforts of the scriptures we have hope*. The Bible should be read by every believer as the will of his heavenly Father, in which lays his vast inheritance; secured by absolute and unconditional promises, which were made to CHRIST, and to us in him, and all ratified with a divine *yea* and *Amen*.

The whole *covenant of promise* that was made with the Saviour, and all the promises and blessings of that covenant were given by the Father to the Son, and by the Son to us: *For I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me*, John xvii. 8. And all these covenant promises and blessings will be found in the church

church in the great day, when the earth and all her works will be burnt up: yea, when all books are burnt up, Bibles and all, the Spirit of GOD, and the word of GOD, will then be found in the church of CHRIST. *As for me, this is my covenant with them, ſaith the* LORD; *my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the* LORD, *from henceforth and for ever*, Iſa. lix. 21. Thus the word and the Spirit will return in the church unto GOD, the fountain of all divine happineſs, and the eternal centre from whom every bleſſing came to the church, and in whom they all muſt terminate with the church.

The great and grand end that the Almighty aimed at in his great works is, *That in the ages to come he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindneſs toward us through* CHRIST JESUS, Eph. ii. 7. The word and Spirit, which are compared to rain, ſhall never leave the world till all the elect are called, made fruitful, and meetened for glory by it. *For as the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither; but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater; ſo ſhall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it ſhall not return unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſend it*, Iſa. lv. 10, 11. Pray, obſerve the above text: the end of a ſhower

ſhower is to give *bread to the eater*; ſo God's word and Spirit, compared thereto, is to make us, *being many, one bread*, 1 Cor. x. 17. that as the *ſhew bread, or the bread of faces*, was ſet on the golden table in the moſt holy place every Sabbath day; even ſo ſhall God's elect be preſented (not like Ephraim, *a cake not turned*, Hoſea vii. 8. but perfectly leavened by the Holy Ghoſt) in the preſence of God; to the glory, honour, pleaſure, and ſatisfaction of every attribute of God, who in the end will be all in all; when the eternal Sabbath (of which the Jewiſh was a ſign) ſhall arrive.

O how ſweet is the word of God! and what a pity that ſo many real Chriſtians are ſo little acquainted with it. What profound myſteries does it ſometimes diſcloſe, when we can read it in the language of our own heart's experience, and feel its divine force and operations, as the bleſſed Spirit is pleaſed to move on thoſe *holy waters of the ſanctuary*.

It is in peruſing the word that we converſe with the Father in his ſecret decrees and purpoſes; with the bleſſed Redeemer in his great undertakings, ſufferings, and ſoul-comforting diſcourſes; and with the bleſſed Spirit, who ſpoke by the patriarchs, prophets, and apoſtles. Yea, I have often found the ſweeteſt companions, and the greateſt company, when I have been alone. It is by the Spirit's operation, by the bond of love, by a unity of ſentiment, and by a unity of the

the faith of GOD's elect, that *we come to the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born which are written in heaven.* It is by our arraignment and juſtification *that we come to* GOD *the Judge of all*; and by the Spirit's operation that we *come to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.* Believing in JESUS for life and ſalvation, *is coming to the Mediator of the new covenant:* and receiving the atonement by faith, is *coming to the blood of ſprinkling that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel,* Heb. xii. 23, 24.

O how I love a Bible Chriſtian! A believer who is not a conſtant reader of his Bible is like a ſoldier without arms. The reaſon of ſo many being led aſtray into all manner of errors is, becauſe they take their religion up upon truſt, and ſo fix their *faith on the wiſdom of men,* inſtead of the *power of* GOD. CHRIST tells us to *ſearch the ſcriptures.* The prophet ſays, *To the law and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.* And in Job we are commanded to pray for divine teaching: *What I know not teach thou me.*

I will never believe that ſo many would be led to credit the doctrines of Univerſaliſts, if they were convinced of the neceſſity of divine teaching, and led to receive it from the Bible. They would find no univerſal grace, nor univerſal redemption there: nor is there any ſigns of it in the world at preſent; for its inhabitants ſeem to get

get worſe and worſe. But do give me a little further account of Prodigalis.

Cushi. The advocates for free-will, human power, and univerſal grace, may extend their own pity and compaſſion as far as they pleaſe: but divine grace and mercy are the properties and prerogatives of God: and therefore they have no right nor warrant to be ſo profuſe and laviſh with that which is not their own. But to proceed. After Prodigalis had put his accuſer to ſilence with the force of truth, theſe words were applied with power to his mind, *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. This was a reproof to Prodigalis, who had neglected that moſt bleſſed duty and privilege of prayer. It was likewiſe to encourage him in future. And the latter part of the text convinced him that he would often ſtand in need of mercy and help; and that if he would have thoſe bleſſings he muſt pray for them. He obeyed the invitation; and ſet his *face to ſeek* God *by prayer and ſupplication*, though it was with much *ſhame and confuſion of face* at firſt: for his unbelief, his cowardice, his murmuring, and his omitting prayer, reading, ſpeaking, and hearing the word, all ſtared him in the face. The Lord will not be neglected nor ſlighted without giving us his ſenſible diſapprobation of it. The Lord's look upon Peter conveyed both reproof and pity; and Peter felt both, when *he wept bitterly*.

But

But notwithſtanding all the faults of poor Prodigalis, the bleſſed Saviour viſited him again with his great ſalvation, and ſealed pardon and peace home on his heart afreſh, to let him know that *peace ſhould be multiplied*; which ſo eſtabliſhed his faith in the unchangeable love of GOD, that he was ready to ſay in this his *proſperity*, *My mountain ſtands ſo ſtrong I ſhall never be moved.* Satan now diſappeared, and Prodigalis went on again in the work and worſhip of the LORD; and, if poſſible, he ſhined brighter, was more humble, and more uſeful in it than uſual. It was with Prodigalis, in a meaſure, as it was with his Maſter; *After Satan had ended all the temptations,* JESUS *returned in the power of the Spirit*; and ſo did he: for he brought many comfortable diſcourſes out of this fiery trial; and was more capable of ſympathizing with, and ſuccouring the tempted, than ever he had been before.

AHIMAAZ. Of all fathers, and of all friends, of all parental and conjugal affections, there is none that bears the leaſt reſemblance to that love and pity that flows to penitent ſinners from the *Father of all mercies, and* GOD *of all comfort through* JESUS CHRIST. It is ſo affecting to me, that I never can feel it without the deepeſt contrition; nor can I even hear of the manifeſtation of it to others, without finding *my head furniſhed with water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears.* GOD the Father's love, and the ſufferings of JESUS CHRIST to procure ſo great ſalvation for the greateſt of ſinners,

ſinners, when applied by the Holy Ghoſt, ſtrikes a man dead to ſin, and to all the world. A ſoul in ſpiritual union with the Saviour, and favoured with a believing view of the benefits of his death, with a feeling ſenſe of his intereſt in it, and with the enjoyment of pardon and peace procured by it, receives ſo deep an impreſſion of divinity, and feels ſo weighty a ſenſation, that if it were to continue, it would be impoſſible for an human ſoul in this life to ſuſtain it. The ſoul diſſolves in it as an ointment; all company is burdenſome; and the body would be ſo neglected, that it would not be able to contain its heavenly inhabitant. Hence it is, that we ſo often feel ſtrong conflicts before we receive theſe kind indulgences, and have them generally counterbalanced with ſome ſucceeding affliction, which is to keep the ſoul in an even ſcale; it being part earthly and part heavenly. And it may be obſerved, that the draft is daily felt in one or other of theſe balances.

Go on, my brother.—You muſt excuſe my breaking in upon you; for when any part of the narrative of Prodigalis agrees with my own experience of the Saviour's great mercy to me, my bowels yearn, and my heart is ready to burſt; I am obliged therefore to imitate Elihu, *Speak, that I may be eaſed.*

Cushi. Why, Prodigalis, after this, went on in a very comfortable and ſucceſsful way; and for a conſiderable time ſeemed well eſtabliſhed, and

and was eminently uſeful; and as he was remarkably fond of ſtudy, and private retirement, he kept up a cloſe communion with his God; and being of an heavenly mind, his pleaſing element was divine meditation; theſe, with the deep experience of his heart, furniſhed him both with word and power for the miniſterial work, better than all the univerſities and academies in the world. A graceleſs collegian underſtood no more of his celeſtial oratory than Prodigalis did of Arabic.

In proceſs of time it happened that various errors began to ſpread and gain ground in thoſe parts where his miniſterial work lay; and as Prodigalis had not been ſuffered to ſtumble into any of thoſe errors, he was at a loſs for argument to oppoſe them. Several of the falſe ambaſſadors challenged and often diſputed with Prodigalis; you know there are none more daring, more confident, or more bold, than thoſe that are hardened under the goſpel, and blinded by the devil. In order to furniſh himſelf with weapons for theſe champions, Prodigalis took to reading ſeveral books of their tenets, that he might dive into their errors, and overthrow their arguments. This dry, barren, and ſoul-deſtroying ſtudy, ſoon brought Prodigalis from his *heavenly mindedneſs*; and the ſweet refreſhing dew that uſed daily to fall on his ſoul was ſenſibly withheld. Theſe books brought an heavy gloom on his mind, which beclouded his underſtanding;

ſtanding; and ſome of their ſubtle, cunning, artful, crafty, and ſophiſtical arguments, at times puzzled his judgment, though his heart and ſoul heaved with indignation againſt the whole of their works.

Now was the time for Satan to work again; and as Prodigalis had been a little lifted up through the abundance of the revelations, ſome of theſe errors was a thorn in his fleſh, and *as meſſengers of Satan they buffeted him* (which GOD permitted), *leſt he ſhould be exalted above meaſure*, 2 Cor. xii. 7. The devil ſet in with many of thoſe errors, and gained a ſecond advantage over him, until by buffeting his mind, by ſuggeſting theſe errors perpetually to him, he ſenſibly wounded Prodigalis in his judgment, filled his ſoul with confuſion, and kept truth and falſehood in a perpetual debate on his mind. This withered all his joys, baniſhed peace and comfort from his heart, and left him to bemoan a ſenſible ſuſpenſion of ſpiritual life and divine conſolation.

AHIMAAZ. O how dangerous are erroneous books! What havoc have they made in the church of CHRIST! They are nets which the LORD permits the infernal fowler to ſpread, in order to catch hypocrites, who receive not the truth in the love of it, and to humble ſome of his own children, who, inſtead of *truſting in the* LORD *with all their hearts, lean too much to their own underſtanding*.

Prodigalis

Prodigalis had no buſineſs to fiſh in any ſuch waters, but to dive deeper and deeper into the myſtery and ſpirit of God's truth: truth is ſufficient both *for ſhield and buckler*. Let a man arm himſelf with this, and through grace he will be able to ſtand and withſtand. Nothing overthrows error like plain and ſimple truth brought from God by prayer; and the knowledge of it, the experience of it, and the practice of it inſiſted on by the power of the Holy Ghoſt. Theſe things, delivered by one who has an experience of them, attended with a ſolemn appeal to God and conſcience, carry all before them, except the preſumptuous, whom God in juſt judgment, and to their own deſtruction, permits, like *Jannes and Jambres*, imperiouſly to ſtand their ground.

For my part, I hate to ſee a young Chriſtian trying the ſtrength of his judgment by an erroneous book, or an erroneous miniſtry. I always think it is a daring preſumptuous tempting of God, and provoking of him to leave us expoſed to the temptations of the devil, as a proof of his diſapprobation, and a juſt reproof for our preſumption. *All that ever came before me*, ſaith the Saviour, *were thieves and robbers; but the ſheep did not hear them*, John x. 8. And many ſuch thieves and robbers are yet to come; and we are commanded not to follow them: *And* Jesus *anſwered and ſaid unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you: for many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am* Christ, *and ſhall deceive many*, Matth. xxiv. 4, 5. *And many falſe prophets ſhall ariſe, and*

ſhall deceive many, Matth. xxiv. 11. *Go not after them, nor follow them*, Luke xvii. 23. *Take heed how ye hear. Beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees, which is hypocriſy.* All theſe are warnings and cautions that we ſhould not tempt God. He commands us to *beware of dogs*, Phil. iii. 2. and not to be ſo fond of *taking them by the ears*, Prov. xxvi. 17.

The Lord grant that I may ever exerciſe my mind in the knowledge of good, and not ſtudy the myſteries of *ſpiritual wickedneſs*, Eph. vi. 12. Adam and Eve were happy while they knew only good; but when they attained to the knowledge of evil, they ſoon found the "knowledge of evil "got, and of good loſt," as ſaith the learned Milton: and ſo many happy ſouls have found it ſince, by diving into the infernal myſteries of ghoſtly iniquity. *It is life eternal to know* God, *and* Jesus Christ *whom he hath ſent*; while on the other hand, the devils, who are maſters of arts with reſpect to their knowledge of the myſteries of iniquity, are as far from happineſs as divine felicity can place them. Some indeed read all ſorts of authors, in order to obtain the right knowledge of God, and the way of ſalvation, by human means. And we may ſay of them, as a great apoſtle ſaith, *They are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* The *Star of Jacob* can never be found out by a teleſcope: nor can a ſaving knowledge of God be obtained by all the lines of practical philoſophy. The man into whoſe heart God ſhines knows

knows him, but no other. *For* GOD, *who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of* GOD *in the face of* JESUS CHRIST, 2 Cor. iv. 6. This is the only revealed way that a ſaving knowledge of GOD can be attained in: philoſophical rules are wholly excluded in this matter: *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit; after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after* CHRIST, Col. ii. 8.

CUSHI. I much admire your aſſertions. Divine knowledge muſt be ſought with a ſuppliant knee at a throne of grace: to ſeek it any other way is a contempt of the revealed will of GOD, and an attempt to be wiſe above what is written. And the farther they go to find out GOD by human means, the deeper they ſink into error. To meaſure divine perfections, and divine conduct, by human lines, and tracing all from the proper centre, down to the bar of depraved and unrenewed reaſon, is puzzling the human ſoul in her fallen ſtate, and loading her rationality with a burden, under which ſhe is ſure (without divine aid) to ſink.

When any child of GOD meets with a difficult text of ſcripture, difficult experience, or providence, how is his mind burdened, until by humble prayer he caſt it off, or reſolve it in the ſovereign will of his GOD; which when done, his faculties reſume their uſual vigour, and he moves

ſweetly in his heavenly ſphere; and by theſe things he finds that God lays no more on him than he enables him to bear.

Many have been drowned in error, open profanity, deſpondency, deſpair, deſtruction, and perdition, by attempting the knowledge of Infinite Divinity by human wiſdom, inſtead of ſubmitting human wiſdom to that which is divine and infinite. *Who can find out the Almighty to perfection? it is higher than heaven, and deeper than hell; broader than the earth, and wider than the ſea,* Job xi. 7, 8, 9. It has puzzled many of the learned naturaliſts in the world to unfold the myſteries of the thunder, and thoſe ſtrange phænomenas the burning mountains. In theſe things they are juſt as much at an uncertainty as Moore's Almanac is in its predictions, from the aſpects of the planets, concerning the weather, which, from the beſt obſervations that I have made, have hitherto been contrary to the events produced by Providence.

The real believer, when he hath conſidered his frame, can with humble adoration ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* And with reſpect to the works of creation, and all the myſteries of nature, he can admire their Author, and ſay, *In wiſdom haſt thou made them all.*

But to proceed.—This was one of the moſt puzzling trials that ever Prodigalis had met with; for when the arch enemy had gained an advan-

advantage over him, and blinded his underſtanding, there was not a myſtery in the Bible but he put his *if* to, and attempted to raiſe doubts in his mind about. The myſtery of the Trinity; the wonderful myſtery of our LORD's incarnation and eſſential divinity; the veracity and authenticity of the Bible; the exiſtence of JEHOVAH; and even the exiſtence of fallen angels, was not left out of the dreadful diſpute; though Prodigalis had ſenſibly felt the power, and wonderfully ſeen the workings of all things then in debate. O how careful ſhould a child of GOD be to avoid theſe things! How many have gone limping and halting to their graves, broken in judgment, barren in ſoul, fruitleſs in life, and confuſed in mind, only by reading erroneous books!

This trial effectually cured Prodigalis of that diſeaſe. After this he acted like thoſe in the Acts; *And many that believed came, and confeſſed, and ſhewed their deeds. Many of them alſo which uſed curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thouſand pieces of ſilver: ſo mighty grew the word of* GOD *and prevailed*, Acts xix. 18, 19, 20. Ancient books of curious arts, and modern books of curſed errors, are both of one lineage; all came from one infernal ſource, and lead to the ſame infernal end. Embracing of an error is receiving of a lie, and holding of a lie is certain deſtruction. *And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth,*

neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev. xxi. 27.

AHIMAAZ. I have no doubt but that fiery trial cured Prodigalis of that diſeaſe. It was with him as it was with the Jews; they were in general doating upon idols until their Babyloniſh captivity; but the commandment of the king of Babylon *in the plains of Dura,* Dan. iii. 1. was a ſufficient purge to cleanſe them: at their return Ephraim was heard to ſay, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Hoſea xiv. 8.

CUSHI. It was for many months that Prodigalis lay in that confuſed and bewildered ſtate; and yet, at the ſame time, never advanced in public one ſentence but what was point blank againſt thoſe errors that his mind was haraſſed with; but ſurely nothing but an experience of a work of grace, and the mighty power of GOD, can ever keep a ſoul ſound in the truth through ſuch ſtrange, myſterious, and confuſed wanderings. However, it was an humbling leſſon to Prodigalis, which none but GOD and himſelf knew; and the application of this text ſunk him into a very ſtrange frame of mind; *Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for the* LORD *hath ſpoken. Give glory to the* LORD *your* GOD, *before he cauſe darkneſs, and before your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the ſhadow of death, and make it groſs darkneſs,* Jer. xiii. 15, 16. Nor was it without a deal of hard

hard wreſtling with GOD in prayer that he got deliverance; GOD made him feel the binding effects of error, that he might be ſatisfied with the knowledge of truth, and not launch into the perilous deep of confuſion, where there is no anchorage.

The firſt text that came as a prelude to his deliverance was, *They alſo that erred in ſpirit ſhall come to underſtanding, and they that murmured ſhall learn doctrine*, Iſa. xxix. 24. The bleſſed Redeemer appeared again, and ſet matters to rights both in his conſcience and judgment, but yet left him for ſome years to feel a ſenſible breach in his ſpirit, which ſerved as a mark for Satan to caſt his darts at. This was to convince him, that he had diſpleaſed the LORD in his curious diving into the infernal depths of Satan, which Prodigalis was ſenſible of. Yet in the end it turned out to ſome good effect. For after this he was very ſelf-diffident; very earneſt in cautioning others againſt error; and ſaw that nothing but a real experience of the truth, and a living faith in omnipotent power, could ever keep any ſoul in ſuch a fiery trial. From this time he became a moſt zealous reprover and oppoſer of error; which gave diſguſt to many who were intire ſtrangers to his conflicts, and therefore altogether ignorant of his inward ſufferings, and of the wretched bitterneſs that had been communicated to his mind. Many of his hearers judged him, and condemned his ſpirit, his zeal,

experience, and miniſtry. But ſoon after, God permitted a few of them to feel the ſame; which ſerved to quench their love to theſe miniſters of falſehood, and led them to prize the truth the more, and thoſe that are zealous advocates for it; ſuch as theſe afterwards became his moſt ſtedfaſt and moſt faithful friends. They began to find and feel the worth of him as an inſtrument; and were fully perſuaded, that if God ſhould remove him they would ſenſibly feel their loſs. However, by ſome of no experience, his zeal was condemned as a bad ſpirit; his levelling the force of truth againſt errors, was called perſonal reflections; and his cloſe attachment to his own teſtimony was called ſingularity: and if, by following the divine tuition of God, he ſtept but one inch from the rules of commentators, he was charged with being erroneous, though none of his enemies could prove him a miniſter of error either in life or doctrine.

Ahimaaz. Every ſaint (as Job ſays) *muſt ſee* God *for himſelf and not for another:* they muſt receive their goſpel from God by the power of his Spirit, if they preach ſo as to *ſave themſelves and them that hear them.* The apoſtle could boaſt, that the goſpel that he preached *was not after man*; that *he learned it not of man, neither was he taught it but by the revelation of* Jesus Christ, Gal. i. 12. It is a moſt daring piece of wickedneſs to oppoſe a man in his own perſonal teſtimony for God, when he is able to prove it to be conſonant with the

the ſcriptures, and ſupports it by the ſame. For my part, I believe that all whom the LORD ſends into his vineyard to labour, can give ſome account of the reaſon of the hope that is in them: but there are ſome ſent out by diſſenting academies, and from our univerſities, who pretend they are ſent, or inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take that office upon them: but they take pretty good care never to inform the church of GOD at large how that inward moving was begun and carried on in them: and what is ſtill worſe, they often oppoſe thoſe that can.

GOD is a ſovereign, and he will proclaim it; and I much queſtion, if ever he leaves the earth without ſome witneſs or other, who will be deemed by ſome an *irregular*, and by others a *bigotted diſſenter*. To monopolize the goſpel, or confine it to any party or ſet of men, is like making an hedge round a cuckow, in order to detain her all the winter.

CUSHI. I have heard of late that ſome have expunged the book of Eſther from their ſtudies as nothing but a dry hiſtory, not canonical; though the whole contents of it are the ſufferings of the church, the ſalvation of GOD's elect, the fulfilment of prophecies, and the experience of GOD's favourites; all which harmonize exactly with all the other ſacred books of ſcripture.

However, Prodigalis ſtedfaſtly taught the doctrines that GOD had applied to his heart; he enforced the power that himſelf had felt; and endea-

endeavoured, according to his light received, to back it with the word of God. Nor were his labours in vain; God owned it to the ſalvation of many ſouls; nor did he ever, after this ſharp trial, pry with a vain curioſity into the myſteries of Satan. The Bible, and the books of good men, were ſufficient to ſatisfy him; and I wiſh that every child of God were contented with the ſame.

After this fiery trial he did not mount ſo uncommonly high in his joys as uſual; but he walked in a more ſteady faith and frame of mind; not ſo eaſily caſt down as formerly, nor lifted up to ſuch an amazing height in divine raptures. In ſhort, the devil could neither deſtroy his hope, nor prevail with him to doubt of his intereſt in the Saviour: yet he travelled on with much brokenneſs of heart before God, and laboured hard under a daily ſenſe of his manifold infirmities.

Ahimaaz. I have often found my mind ſenſibly injured and wounded only by the rehearſal of an error, and the ſophiſtical garb in which an advocate for the devil has ſwaddled it up, in order to degrade the truth of God, and deceive the hearts of the ſimple, which is no wonder; for it is the juſt that the devil aims to injure; he hath the wicked in his own poſſeſſion. Hence it is that he cannot deceive the godly without blending the truth with his lies; and the more truth the more taking, as may be ſeen in the word of God.

GOD. The temptation that he brought to Eve had ſome of GOD's word in it; and ſo had that which he brought to the Saviour: though both were perverted ſo as to lead to preſumption: for in all Satan's turnings and windings he always purſues one end, which is, the promotion of his own kingdom, to the diſhonour of GOD in the deſtruction of ſouls.

O how many are there in this day, and ſome that I perſonally know, who have been ſeduced from a tolerable profeſſion of the goſpel, and from an apparent reformation, only by reading the curſed ſyſtems of error, which to this day are ſo harneſſed with it, that, as the prophet ſays, *Truth is fallen, and equity cannot enter*, Iſa. lix. 15. the deluſion is ſo ſtrong.

Such proſelytes will add to the torments of thoſe who have left their curſed traps behind them: and as they have appeared as blind leaders in this world, they will appear ſupreme in miſery in the next. Such men *die not in their own ſin* only, Numb. xxvii. 3. but they have entailed the ſins and deſtruction of thouſands on the ſcore of their own ſouls; *having ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men; not entering themſelves, nor ſuffering others to enter.*

I have ſeen erroneous men in ſuch a light as can never be deſcribed: but the great day will reveal it: the whole myſtery of iniquity ſhall be diſcovered by *the brightneſs of the* LORD'S *riſing, and be conſumed with the breath of his lips.*

CUSHI.

CUSHI. However, this is a comfort, that though it be ſaid, IF *it were poſſible they ſhall deceive the very elect*; yet that little *if* is worth a thouſand worlds; for it renders it an impoſſibility for a choſen veſſel to be finally deceived: and ſurely Prodigalis is a living witneſs of this truth: and this trial of his cured his ears of their itching, and convinced him of the need of ſtudying and ſticking cloſe to the book of GOD. He found that error, as well as the leaſt tranſgreſſion, made ſad breaches in his comfortable union and communion with his ever bleſſed Saviour; which is the life and ſoul of all real religion. And indeed he found it no eaſy work to obtain it again; which when obtained made him prize it the more, and made him the more fearful to offend.

AHIMAAZ. For my part I have not a doubt but theſe things were made uſeful to him in his future miniſtry: for as he had ſenſibly felt the bondage and confuſion of error, it muſt ſerve as a ſpur to his future zeal in oppoſing error with the force of truth, becauſe his own ſoul had felt the wretched effects of it.

CUSHI. Indeed *all things work together for good to them that love* GOD, *and are the called according to his purpoſe.* But CHRIST tells us to *take heed how we hear:* and Prodigalis had ſeen that text in its true meaning, and obediently took the caution; and was effectually convinced, that nothing leſs than an heart-felt experience of the truth,

truth, the teachings of the Holy Ghoſt, and the LORD's ſupporting hand, could ever keep a man ſound in the faith, when ſtrongly oppoſed either by the devil or his agents.

AHIMAAZ. And was the latter part of his life ſmooth and even? Did he continue ſtedfaſt in his teſtimony, and induſtrious in the miniſtry of the word?

CUSHI. He continues ſtedfaſt, for aught I know, to this day: but as for an even path, I believe that ſeldom laſts long with ſuch an one as he. When a man has been deſperately wicked from his youth, and accuſtomed to many evil practices; if ſuch an one be called by grace, he has his old beſetting ſins to ſtruggle with; they will purſue him: and although the goodneſs of GOD is ſo great as to *keep him by his mighty power, through faith unto ſalvation*; yet his old habitual cuſtoms the devil often brings ſtrongly to his mind. And if theſe are indulged, even but in thought, divine comforts are oft abated. Againſt theſe he long prayed, and at times thought he greatly prevailed: but to his ſorrow he ſtill feels, that *when he would do good evil is preſent with him.* He often envied thoſe who had been kept from the vices and follies of childhood and youth; judging that they had not ſuch habitual cuſtoms of evil to grapple with, as thoſe that have run with the reins on their own necks into an open courſe of wickedneſs. He always ſaid, that the

beſt antidote againſt the troubleſome thoughts of vanity was—labouring in the miniſtry, private ſtudy, private meditation, private prayer, private communion with God, and ſpiritual converſation with ſound and lively Chriſtians. In theſe things he delighted as in his moſt pleaſing element. But he was very cautious not to ſtand in the way of ſinners; nor yet, in any diſpute with the wicked or erroneous, give up one ſingle article of the teſtimony that God had applied to his heart; finding it ſo conſiſtent with the unerring word of God, which muſt ever be our rule. Prodigalis knew that *the prudent were crowned with knowledge*; and that crown we muſt not give up. *Hold faſt that which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown*, ſays the Saviour.

Ahimaaz. Thoſe ſouls that are kept in their youth from an open courſe of wickedneſs, have not thoſe cutting and bitter reflections, when brought under convictions, that the vile and vicious have: yet I have often obſerved, that their former legality has ſtuck as cloſe to their ſouls to keep them in bondage, as the bad practices of others do to bring them into ſin. I myſelf was kept very upright and moral through all the days of my natural ſtate, to outward appearance: but alas! God *ſees not as man ſees*; *man looks at the outward appearance, but* God *looketh on the heart*, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. and ſo I found it, for my ſelf-ſufficiency, ſelf-righteouſneſs, and legal pride:—

theſe heart ſins were as deteſtable in the eyes of the LORD as the open profanity even of Prodigalis himſelf. And although his arraignment and trial was dreadful to paſs through, yet his wonderful deliverance afforded as ſtrong a conſolation as the other did a grievous affliction.

Beſides, my brother, you know that none but the elect are called: *Whom he did predeſtinate, theſe he alſo called.* And the elect are all known of GOD: *Whom he did foreknow, them he did predeſtinate.* This being the caſe, *the bounds of their habitation,* the place and time of their converſion, yea, the manner how, and even the *mouth made choice of,* Acts xv. 7. in order to convey the word of life to their converſion, is all fore-appointed, and immutably fixed in the eternal decree. Therefore, whether their life, in their unconverted ſtate, be openly wicked, or legally upright, it is according to divine permiſſion.

The apoſtle Paul was a choſen veſſel, although he went ſuch a ſingular length in perſecuting the ſaints even unto death. GOD permitted him to go thus far, that in the converſion of ſuch a man it might be proclaimed to the world, what free and irreſiſtible grace could do: *Howbeit, for this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt* JESUS CHRIST *might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting,* 1 Tim. i. 16.

CUSHI.

CUSHI. All thoſe things are true; yet for my part I would rather have been kept from open vice in my natural ſtate, than have been permitted to fall into it. Our LORD takes notice of this in Peter, who according to his own account had *walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries,* 1 Pet. iv. 3. I ſay the LORD takes notice of this; and well he might: *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee* [Peter], *when thou waſt young thou girdedſt thyſelf, and walked whither thou wouldeſt; but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not,* John xxi. 18. Such poor miſerable ſinners as Peter, Prodigalis, and myſelf, have a deal to ſuffer; and though GOD *doth abundantly pardon,* Iſa. lv. 7. yet ſuch cannot forgive themſelves: the thoughts of their wretched wicked life, and of the abuſe of GOD's long-ſuffering mercy, is cauſe of much mourning in ſecret. But eternal election to life ſweetens all. For ſuch can often look back and ſee that the afflicting hand of GOD hath often been upon them, and his preventing or delivering hand hath often been with them, even from the cradle. *I led Ephraim* (ſaid GOD), *but he knew it not.—I girded thee* [Cyrus], *though thou haſt not known me,* Iſa. xlv. 5. In ſhort, all the elect may ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Thou haſt been with me from my mother's womb:* or with Jacob, GOD *hath fed me all my life long unto this day.*

AHIMAAZ.

AHIMAAZ. I am ſure I can ſay the ſame. For notwithſtanding my outward ſhew of religion, I felt perpetually the accuſations of a guilty conſcience; and I knew that I indulged myſelf in many ſecret ſins, which both GOD and conſcience were privy to. Thus I can ſee that GOD gave me many a check, even in my blind ſtate. In ſhort, both the Phariſee and the Publican are dead in ſoul until quickened by grace: the *painted ſepulchre*, and the *ſow in the mire*, are both of a piece, and both on a level, under the law, and both in unbelief, and conſequently both in a ſtate of condemnation. And this GOD often made me feel by many ſecret laſhes of conſcience. For I knew that I was not that man in heart that I appeared to be in life: and as a confounded and abaſhed hypocrite I have often ſtood at the bar of my own conſcience; for I knew that all my works and ſhew of religion was only to be ſeen of men: *And how can ſuch believe, who receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from* GOD *only?* John v. 44. The beſt of men in a ſtate of nature, when once GOD begins to work on their ſouls, are like the antediluvians, *between two floods*—the *inundations of guilt*—and the *floodgates of wrath.*—But do tell me how Prodigalis went on after his laſt trial.

CUSHI. For ſome time his communion with his LORD was cloſe and ſweet; and while this

was enjoyed, his diſcourſes were very heavenly and rapturous; inſomuch that poor diſtreſſed and doubting ſouls could get nothing under him; he was too high for them, and too much filled with the joys of heaven to come down to their diſagreeable feelings; for you know *it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth ſpeaketh*: therefore the poor weaklings of the flock could only bear witneſs to the light of his countenance, and envy him his happineſs. He preached up holineſs likewiſe to a very high pitch; inſomuch that you would have thought at times that he had been perfect.

Ahimaaz. If that was the caſe, poor broken-hearted ſinners, and thoſe buffeted by the devil, could get but little ſympathy from him. For tempted ſouls, that are labouring under the plague of their own heart, think themſelves as far from holineſs as Satan himſelf; when at the ſame time it is the quickening and illuminating power of the Holy Ghoſt that makes them feel and ſee the evil of their hearts. I have heard men preach as if divine holineſs were to be produced and put in practice by fleſh and blood. They call for heart holineſs, family holineſs, life holineſs, inſomuch that I have gone groaning home, and crying out, I have no holineſs at all.

Cushi. Yes; and there are many double-refined Phariſees in the world, that are deſtitute of

of the Spirit of GOD, who yet appear in all that outward garb of holineſs that ſuch call for. I have heard people preach up holineſs in that way: but unleſs a man tells me where holineſs is to be got, and how holineſs has operated on his own heart, I generally conclude that he knows but little of the matter.

The Bible informs me, that *Jehovah is the holy One. There is none holy as the* LORD; *for there is none beſides thee*, 1 Sam. ii. 2. GOD is the only fountain of holineſs, and the elect have their holineſs from him. *We have had fathers of our fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; ſhall we not rather be in ſubjection to the Father of ſpirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chaſtened us after their own pleaſure, but he for our profit,* THAT WE MIGHT BE PARTAKERS OF HIS HOLINESS, Heb. xii. 9, 10.

The ſanctification of a believer is, firſt, in CHRIST his Head; *He is made of* GOD *unto us* SANCTIFICATION, *and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. In CHRIST the believer's ſanctification is compleat: *Ye are compleat in him*, Col. ii. 10. CHRIST ſays, *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no ſpot in thee*, Song iv. 7.

Secondly, The believer's ſanctification is alſo by the Spirit of GOD: *Elect according to the foreknowledge of* GOD *the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and ſprinkling of the blood of* JESUS CHRIST, 1 Pet. i. 2.

Thus you ſee the believer is compleat in CHRIST his Head, and ſanctified in part by the Holy Ghoſt, though he be not thereby made perfect in this life: for *if we ſay we have no ſin we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us.* This is all the holineſs that the Bible ſpeaks of; and this is the holineſs that every real believer partakes of: and it is called, by way of eminence and diſtinction, *true holineſs*, in oppoſition to that which is falſe and feigned, and only makes a noiſe, and an outward ſhow in the world. Wherever this holineſs is found, it is the workmanſhip of GOD, and the glory of CHRIST's image. *That ye put on the new man, which after* GOD *is created in righteouſneſs and* TRUE HOLINESS, Eph. iv. 24. *after the image of him that created him,* Col. iii. 10.

The ſoul that is united to CHRIST by the bond of love, and ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, is a *holy man of* GOD, 2 Pet. i. 21. and walks *in the path of holineſs*, Iſa. xxxv. 8. his converſation will be holy, 1 Pet. i. 15. and *he has his fruit unto holineſs, and his end everlaſting life*, Rom. vi. 22. All cloſet holineſs, family holineſs, or life holineſs, that ſprings not from this root, or flows not from this fountain, is only the *varniſh of a hypocrite*, and may be found or ſeen on thoſe whoſe hearts are filled with covetouſneſs, and where legal pride is enthroned, and Satanic rebellion encouraged.

AHIMAAZ.

AHIMAAZ. He that cleaveth the cloſeſt to the Saviour will ever be the moſt holy in heart, and the moſt fruitful in life: *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.* And that man will ever be the moſt happy whoſe heart is the moſt ſtedfaſt with the LORD: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee,* Iſa. xxvi. 3. But do inform me how Prodigalis went on, and how long he continued on the mount.

CUSHI. Why, after he had been ſome time in this exalted frame, and had delivered many diſcourſes as it were from the very threſhold of heaven, the LORD was pleaſed to bring him under a ſtrange diſcipline. In his private ſtudy he was very happy, and the ſcriptures were open to him, inſomuch that he generally went from his ſtudy furniſhed with a text, and the various heads of doctrine contained in it lay plain in his view, and often afforded him much comfort; but when he began to ſpeak, he found neither liberty in ſpirit nor in ſpeech; a gloomy confuſion came gradually over his mind; his thoughts fled from him, he loſt ſight of his ſubject, and his treacherous memory refuſed to give back what had been committed to her. This diſagreeable ſtraitneſs of ſoul rendered the miniſtry a burden to him; for he never had experienced much before this of being *bound in the ſpirit*; which was the more puzzling to him.

Having been exerciſed a few times this way, he began to complain to his flock of the various changes that paſſed on his mind, and of the difficult experiences that he had been exerciſed with. Theſe things reached the hearts of the tried ones, and they gathered food under it; which was quite a myſtery to Prodigalis; that a man in miſery ſhould be a miniſter of comfort. They appeared to him in no better light than the Philiſtines, who ſhouted againſt Samſon when he was bound, but dared not ſo much as look him in the face when he was free. The weak and feeble believers, being ſo joyful, provoked him to ſpiritual jealouſy. His adverſaries hearing his complaints, and perceiving him at times to faulter in his ſpeech, triumphed over him: while the Antinomian hypocrites, who hated his experience, who talk of faith and religion, while ſtrangers to the power of both, were in daily expectation that his mouth would be ſtopped, and his miniſtry and profeſſion ſink into obſcurity, and plague them no more.

Beſides, he ſoon found that the bands that he felt in the pulpit followed him into his ſtudy likewiſe, until he went mourning all the day long. He had not arrived to that profound depth of experience that Paul had when he ſaid, *And whether we be afflicted, it is for your conſolation and ſalvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings which we alſo ſuffer; or whether*

we

we be comforted, it is for your conſolation and ſalvation, 2 Cor. i. 6.

AHIMAAZ. Though I often appeared ſo forward formerly to run with tidings, yet ſince I have been called by grace, I have trembled for fear it ſhould ever fall to my lot. I ſee it the moſt important work under the ſun. A miniſter, as a public perſon, has many that will cleave to him, which are looking to him, and depending on him, under GOD, for inſtruction; and theſe perſons he muſt be accountable for, as a ruler of the houſehold; which if he lead wrong, their blood is on his head: for they depended on him, by taking him to be what he pretended to be, namely, GOD'*s ſaint*, GOD'*s ſervant*, GOD'*s ambaſſador*, and GOD'*s mouth*. This is what every real miniſter is, and this is what every falſe preacher pretends to be, as well as a true one. If he be a falſe prophet, he will ſpit his venom at thoſe that are true, and, to the utmoſt of his power, endeavour to vindicate himſelf in theſe characters, which his arrogance has aſſumed; and blind, and bind all to him that he can. If he be a real believer in JESUS CHRIST, and one that is ſent of GOD, he is right in vindicating himſelf in the above characters, and in declaring GOD's plain truth, as he hath felt it in his own heart; and as he lives it in his own life, he is a true ſaint, ſervant, and ambaſſador of CHRIST, and a faithful leader: he delivers his own ſoul, by declaring

the whole counſel of GOD; and clears himſelf of the blood of thoſe that periſh in their ſins; and is a miniſter of the Spirit to thoſe who are truly ſpiritual.

While, on the other hand, he that is a deceiver comes in GOD's name, who never ſent him: he ſays he is ſent of GOD, or inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt, when he never was; perſonates GOD, whom he is a ſtranger to; appears in an office that GOD never conferred on him, and oppoſes thoſe whom CHRIST hath ſent. Hence poor deluded ſouls, by believing his lies, look to him for inſtruction, as GOD's ſervant, when he is not: and if he prevails with them to adhere to, and live and die in his deluſions, both the leader and the led end in deſtruction together; or, as CHRIST ſaith, *The blind lead the blind, until both fall into the ditch.*

CUSHI. What you have ſaid is true: but Prodigalis was no deceiver; *He went forth and wrought, and the* LORD *worked with him, and confirmed his word with many ſigns.* But to be brief about his next trial. This bondage in his pulpit ſoon followed him home to his ſtudy, as was before obſerved, and at a throne of grace alſo, until his life, as well as his miniſterial work, became both *labour and ſorrow.*

Under this moſt diſtreſſing and moſt miſerable croſs, Prodigalis found dreadful murmuring and complaining: his old beſetting ſins began to call

for ſome acknowledgment for paſt favours, and offered their pleaſures in this his comfortleſs ſituation, if by any means they might gain a little loſt favour, be a preſent prop, or lend a little preſent aſſiſtance toward *lengthening of his tranquillity.*

This bait was not altogether unſeaſonable. Darkneſs and bondage in prayer; the ſame in ſtudy; the ſame in company; the ſame in the pulpit,—made him catch at comfort from any quarter. Carnal comforts are never repreſented to an heaven-born ſoul in ſo deluſive a garb, as when divine conſolations are fled. When *the good man is not at home, but is on a long journey, and hath taken the bag of money with him*; then it is that the world *comes with her much fair ſpeech, and flattering lips, in order to cauſe us to yield,* Prov. vii. 19, 20, 21.

Now was the time for Satan to work; and as he found that all divine comforts were gone, by the groaning petitions of Prodigalis; and that many of his former beſetting ſins began to gain upon his affections, and to meet with a little indulgence, though it was but in thought; yet the devil drew him, before ever he was aware, to the court of conſcience, and made his appeal to the heart, the thoughts, and even to the very conſcience of Prodigalis.

Firſt, the Plaintiff ſhewed, That his heart was got cold to the work, worſhip, people, and ways

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of GOD; which the Defendant could not deny: for as he had met with nothing but frowns of late, in the ways of GOD, and as all divine comforts had left him, he could not deny but that earthly comforts had been indulged and embraced by him, as a rival to the GOD *of all comfort.*

Secondly, The Plaintiff ſhewed, That the life of a real Chriſtian was ſuch, as never to offend either GOD, conſcience, or men: that the real ſaint was one that *exerciſed himſelf day and night, always to have a conſcience void of offence both toward* GOD *and towards men,* Acts xxiv. 16.

Thirdly, That Prodigalis *had left his firſt love,* Rev. ii. 4. that as *iniquity had abounded, his love had waxed cold*; and therefore he had apoſtatiſed in heart from his GOD. Nor could he be deemed one of the number of them that perſevere; *for he that endureth to the end* [in his firſt love] *ſhall be ſaved.*

The Plaintiff farther ſhewed, That the thoughts of Prodigalis were often very carnal; and that inſtead of having *every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of* CHRIST, at certain ſeaſons he had not a thought for CHRIST.

Fourthly, That Prodigalis not only allowed theſe wanderings of heart, but at times really encouraged them, and ſeemed to be entertained by them, eſpecially when the preſence of his LORD was gone; and therefore he could not ſay, *I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.*

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The Plaintiff ſhewed, That he not only indulged theſe *vain thoughts that lodged within him*; but that in the hours of ſenſible deſertion he had endeavoured to ſuck comfort from them.

Sixthly, That in ſome of his peeviſh fits he had even envied the happineſs of the wicked, *who are not in trouble as other men, nor plagued like other folks.*

Seventhly, That he had gone ſo far in this his peeviſhneſs as to *call the proud happy, whom* GOD *reſiſteth:* and in his deep poverty he had called *the covetous bleſſed, whom the* LORD *abhorreth.*

Eighthly, The Plaintiff further ſhewed, That Prodigalis had not only given in to them in heart and word, but that *he had been brought into captivity to the law of ſin that is in his members.*

Ninthly, The Plaintiff appealed to the heart, thoughts, and conſcience of Prodigalis for confirmation; and aſked if he could ſay, *That his rejoicing was in the teſtimony of a good conſcience,* as Paul did? Could he ſay, *Happy is the man that condemneth not himſelf in the thing which he alloweth,* Rom. xiv. 22. Nay, ſaid the Plaintiff, you are ſo far from this, that thy own thoughts condemn thee. Therefore thou canſt not lay thine hand upon thy heart and ſay, in an holy triumph, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my ſoul,* Pſalm xciv. 19. The plaintiff

plaintiff added, *He that is born of* God *ſinneth not.*

Ahimaaz. Why, the devil ſticks to his old text.

Cushi. Yes; and he will ſtick to it, until the poor believer either find out the real meaning of it, or elſe fall into error, or deſpondency under the devil's temptations about it. Satan threw down Adam with a text of ſcripture, and took the ſame method when he tempted the Son of God.

Ahimaaz. I think this is one of the moſt puzzling trials that ever Prodigalis had. It is a dreadful thing to a ſoul that is quickened, humbled, and bleſſed with a tender feeling of the evil of ſin, and with a filial fear of God, and an heart bent to honour him, for ſuch an one to be ſo left of God, as for his old wretched cuſtoms to be purſuing his mind, and entangling his thoughts, after he has ſo ſorely ſuffered under the ſight and ſenſe of them. But, as poor Job ſays, *Such poſſeſs the iniquity of their youth*, even in that ſenſe, though not the guilt of them.

For my part, I have often wiſhed that God had took me to himſelf in my firſt love; or elſe had granted me a reſidence where I might never ſee man, woman, or child; yea, neither ſun, moon, nor ſtars. For the world is full of nothing but evil; look which way you will, ſin preſents itſelf: and if that ſteals on the heart, then

then my comforts die; I wiſh either for heaven, or for the lonely cot of a hermit.

CUSHI. If you had died in your firſt love, how could you have *ſerved your generation?* and if you were ſhut up like a hermit, how could you *let your light ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works?*

Your firſt requeſt ſavours of a diſtruſt of GOD's power to keep you; and the laſt ſavours of cowardice, and of a narrow ſpirit: juſt as if the devil was to be left ſole ranger of the world, becauſe he has ſpread the earth with traps. No; it well becomes the ſaints, as good ſoldiers of JESUS CHRIST, to ſeek the welfare of the children of Iſrael, and the kingdom of their ever bleſſed LORD: to oppoſe the devil's reign, and expoſe the devil's works alſo; and ſo to weaken his intereſt as much as poſſible. And though we find it a perilous work, and are in imminent danger at it, yet the battle is the LORD's; the cauſe of truth is the LORD's cauſe; and his truth is our armour; and the promiſe of victory is ſure to all the ſeed. The LORD tells us to *quit ourſelves like men*, inſtead of *creeping into holes*: and we may depend upon it, that his *ſtrength will be made perfect in our weakneſs*, becauſe he hath promiſed it. And when he comes to ſay, in the great day, *Well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy* LORD, that will pay for all.

AHIMAAZ.

AHIMAAZ. Pray how long did Prodigalis labour under this trial?

CUSHI. For many months; yet no man could hate ſin more; no man mourned over it, ſtruggled with it, or prayed againſt it, more than he did; but notwithſtanding all his efforts, he found himſelf to be a man burdened with the *body of ſin and death*, which, GOD knows, he ſorely groaned under. Beſides his ſituation was none of the moſt pleaſing; he had a large flock to feed, whether his own ſoul was flouriſhing or barren; he had many enemies in the world, as well as friends; his enemies *watched for his halting*, and his friends looked at him as a copy; the firſt looked for deſtruction, and the latter for perfection, and both were deceived; for though he had as baſe an heart as the worſt of them, and more temptations to grapple with than all of them, yet GOD did not permit him to be *utterly caſt down*, to gratify his enemies, though there was enough expoſed to convince his friends that he was not perfect, but that the treaſure was in an earthen veſſel.

The poor creature travelled in this way till his very ſoul was bowed down within him, and Satan tempted him even to *chuſe ſtrangling rather than life*, Job vii. 15. or to drown himſelf, rather than ſuffer thus; yea, he wanted him to imitate Jonah, *leave the work*, and flee from it; he was ſo beſet with temptations, and with conſcience, that his very heart and ſoul failed him.

However, at laſt he went to his LORD with as heavy an heart as mortal could bear. He firſt ſat down in his chair and reaſoned with his LORD, until his ſorrow began to give way; he then kneeled on his knees—he confeſſed—he wept—he pleaded—he ſupplicated, until he obtained theſe ſweet words as an anſwer to his prayer—*If our heart condemn us,* GOD *is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things,* 1 John iii. 20. he immediately felt ſtrength communicated to his ſoul; his accuſing conſcience was ſilenced; he got up from his knees, and put the devil to flight with this text—*My fleſh and my heart faileth, but* GOD *is the ſtrength of my heart and my portion for ever,* Pſa. lxxiii. 26.

Now was the dear Redeemer more precious to Prodigalis than ever; his ſoul was ſweetly becalmed, and bleſſed with a double portion of life and peace; every evil thought of his heart vaniſhed—every beſetting ſin was deteſted and abhorred, and heaven itſelf ſeemed, if poſſible, to be in full view; and the poor man vainly thought, and indeed often ſaid, that he was ripening for glory;—that his work was pretty well done—that he ſhould not be long in this world, and that he was too happy to live. But the LORD counterbalanced his anxiety for heaven, by laying the concerns of his flock *in the midſt of wolves,* his wife, family, and friends, on his mind, which *brought him into a ſtreight between*

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two, having a desire to depart and be with CHRIST, *which is better* than being here; nevertheless *to abide in the flesh is more needful for you*, Phil. i. 23, 24. says Paul, and so Prodigalis thought, and therefore he prayed for submission to the will of GOD, that *whether he lived he might live to the* LORD, *or whether he died he might die to the* LORD; *that whether he lived therefore or whether he died, he might be the* LORD'S.

AHIMAAZ. That is a most safe and a most blessed frame of mind—to be resigned to the will of GOD. There is no galling cross when our wills lay streight with the will of GOD; it is our perverse will contradicting, or laying counter to GOD's will, that makes the cross, and the loss is all our own; for when we have made it we are compelled to take it up. In this we act like Haman, who erected his own gallows at his own expence. The Saviour has coupled self-denial and the daily cross together; if self be denied, the cross will lay easy; if self be consulted, then the cross galls us. But blessed for ever be the dear Redeemer, who knows whereof we are made —who knows the weakness of human nature, and confessed it, though his body and soul were perfectly free and pure from that sin and corruption that we feel, yet he complained that *the spirit was truly willing, but the flesh was weak.*

The faithfulness of the Saviour appears wonderful in the repeated deliverances of Prodigalis.

digalis. Well might Eliphaz tell Job that God *would deliver him in ſix troubles, yea in ſeven no evil ſhould touch him*, Job. v. 19. Prodigalis is a living witneſs of the delivering hand of God, and muſt be well acquainted with the bleſſed Saviour, eſpecially in his glorious office as an Advocate.

Cushi. Yes, the office of Christ as an Advocate is precious to Prodigalis, and to other poor tempted ſouls, who lay under the accuſations of Satan; indeed every poor ſinner has three to accuſe him; ſometimes his ſins cry with an accuſing voice, as the ſins of Sodom are ſaid to do, Gen. xviii. 20, 21. Conſcience alſo will often accuſe him, live how he may; and Satan will accuſe him right or wrong; but, bleſſed be God, *we have an Advocate with the Father*, Jesus Christ *the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our ſins*; and I believe it is not an eaſy matter for Satan to get the ear of God the Father againſt us, becauſe he has reconciled us to himſelf by Jesus Christ; this Prodigalis found by bleſſed experience, therefore he continually looks to and calls on his Advocate, every time he feels an accuſation; he ſees the need of Jesus Christ in every office-character that he ſuſtains, and is very wiſe in eying the Saviour in them according to the various trials that he paſſes through.

Ahimaaz. And pray how did Prodigalis manage that text that Satan ſo often buffeted

him with; namely—*He that is born of* GOD *sinneth not*; that is a very myſterious text; did he ever make it out? John ſays, that *if we ſay we have no ſin we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us*; and James ſays, *In many things we offend all*; and Solomon declares *there is not a juſt man upon earth that doeth good and ſinneth not*; and yet John ſays, *He that is born of* GOD *ſinneth not*. Some ſay, it means that a juſt man doth not ſerve ſin, and that he doth not ſin with the full conſent of his will, as an unregenerate man doth.

CUSHI. That is a poor comment. Jonah ſinned with the full conſent of his will when he choſe a voyage to Joppa, rather than a walk to Nineveh. Paul ſays, *With the mind I myſelf ſerve the law of* GOD, *but with the fleſh the law of ſin*, Rom. vii. 25. The dreadful evil that Adam contracted by his fall, and which is propagated to us by natural generation, is called the *old man*, even in regenerate perſons. *That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh*, and will never be mended; it will retain its own deviliſh nature—deviliſh motions—and deſperate ſtrugglings for maſtery, even in the beſt of men, as may be ſeen in Paul's complaint in the ſeventh to the Romans. This is called the *old man*; and, like a deſperate criminal under ſentence, it will oppoſe that grace that reigns over it; inſomuch, that when the believer *would do good evil is preſent with him*; *and how to perform that which is good he finds not*; it is as *binding* as a *law*, and as *furious* as an *hero*;—*I ſee another law*

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in my members WARRING *againſt the law of my mind*, Rom. vii. 23.

This being the caſe, John ſays, *If we ſay we have no ſin we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us*; while, on the other hand, ſpiritual and divine life, which the believer receives from the Saviour's fulneſs by the word and ſpirit of grace, is called an *incorruptible ſeed*; it is called the *new man*; it is called CHRIST *in us the hope of glory*; it is called CHRIST *dwelling in the heart by faith. This is born of* GOD, *and will overcome the world*, 1 John v, 4. and the old man too—*Grace ſhall reign, through righteouſneſs, unto eternal life, by* JESUS CHRIST *our* LORD, Rom. v. 21.

Thus the *new man, which is born of the ſpirit, is ſpirit*, and will never be influenced by carnality; and the *old man* made up of ſin, which is *born of the fleſh, is fleſh*, and will never be made holy by divinity; *Whoſoever is born of* GOD *doth not commit ſin, for* HIS SEED *remaineth in him*; *and* HE *cannot ſin becauſe he is* BORN *of* GOD, 1 John iii. 9. Sin will ever be ſin, and grace will ever be grace.—Sin will end in death temporal or eternal, and *grace will reign to life eternal.* The way to get at John's meaning is to compare 1 John iii. 9. with 1 John v. 4. where the poor ſoul will get full ſatisfaction.

AHIMAAZ. I believe that to be the real meaning of the text, becauſe it harmonizes with other parts of GOD's word; and for my part I am ſa-

tisfied with your thoughts on it; and I take it for granted, that it was made out in that way to poor Prodigalis.

Cushi. It was; and therefore the devil never offered to give him another lecture on that ſubject, when he found that he underſtood its meaning. Satan works chiefly in the dark with God's people; when they are in dark frames, then he comes boldly; but when the rays of God ſhine upon them, he ſtands at a diſtance, he *hates the light* with perfect hatred.

Ahimaaz. O what a great ſalvation are we ſaved with! What potent and ſubtil enemies have poor believers got to grapple with! And what need is there of being fervent in ſpirit, and diligent in the means of grace, which God hath appointed for our growth and encouragement. Pray how does Prodigalis go on now?

Cushi. He goes on as moſt of the Lord's people do, I believe. Sometimes he is up, and ſometimes down; ſometimes in the light, and ſometimes in the dark. He often complains of his wicked heart, and of the weakneſs of his faith; his ſhort-lived joys, and long-lived corruptions; but *againſt hope he ſtill believes in hope*; and ſays, that he ſhall neither believe nor hope in vain. Satan cannot diſpute him out of his ſonſhip, nor buffet him with the word of God, as he formerly has done, on account of the corruptions of his own heart. For he ſays there is not a corruption that he groans under, but what he

he can find ſome ſaints in the word of GOD that have groaned under the ſame; and while he is in the footſteps of the flock he thinks he is ſafe. All that he is afraid of is, that GOD ſhould leave him to himſelf; he is truly ſenſible of his own weakneſs, and at times finds it no eaſy matter to believe that GOD will keep him upright even to the end, though he believes he ſhall be eternally ſaved. He dreads the thought of falling; the thoughts of broken bones, and of going halting to the grave, is a terror to his ſoul.

AHIMAAZ. The LORD preſerve and keep him through this perilous wilderneſs; and when you ſee him, tell him that AHIMAAZ, formerly a *tidings-bearer*, a Reubenite, one *unſtable as water*, ſaluteth him, and wiſhes grace, mercy, and peace to him. And now what ſhall I ſay to thee, with whom I have taken ſuch ſweet counſel, and with whom I have ſpent the ſweeteſt moments that I ever ſpent. The LORD reward thee, my brother —*ſend thee help from the ſanctuary, and ſtrengthen thee out of Zion—accept thine offerings—grant thee according to thine own heart—and fulfil all thy councils*; and GOD *forbid that I ſhould ever ceaſe praying for thee*, whom GOD has made ſo great a bleſſing to me.

CUSHI. The LORD be with thee, my dear brother, and *ſtrengthen thee by his ſpirit's might in the inner man, that thou mayeſt be ſtrong in the grace that is in* CHRIST JESUS; and thou muſt not

wonder if ſome temptation ſhould befal thee after this long and happy converſation that we have had. Remember *adverſity* and *proſperity* are ſet one againſt the other; expect a *daily croſs*, and a *glorious end*, and thou wilt not be diſappointed of either. Fare thee well; the *ſhield of Abraham*, and the *fear of Iſaac*, be ever with thee.

AHIMAAZ. Amen; and with thee alſo.

FINIS.

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